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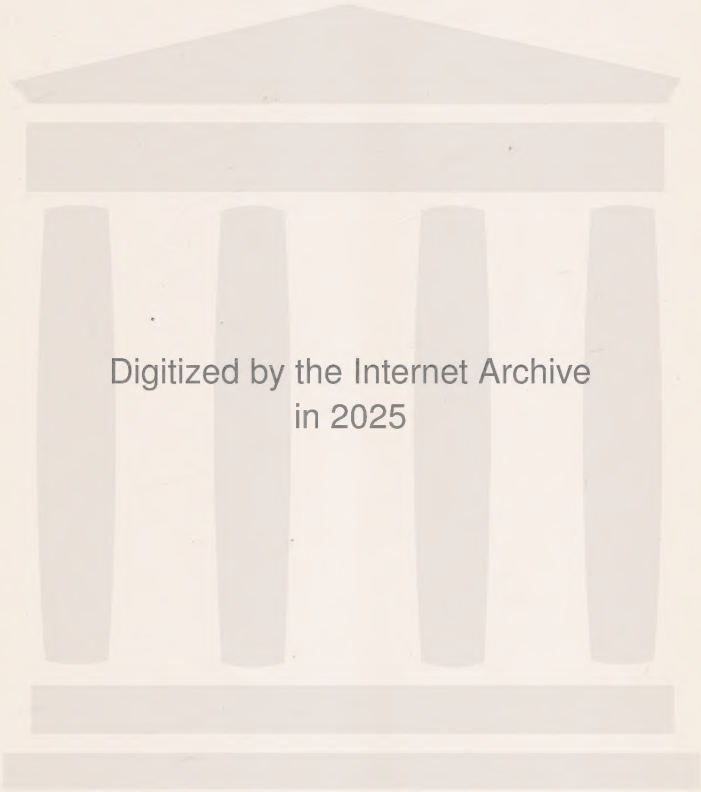
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REPERTORIUM

ORATORIS SACRI,

CONTAINING OUTLINES OF

SIX HUNDRED SERMONS,

FOR ALL THE

SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR;

ALSO FOR OTHER SOLEMN OCCASIONS.

COMPILED

FROM THE WORKS OF EMINENT PREACHERS

OF VARIOUS AGES AND NATIONS

BY A SECULAR PRIEST.

WITH THE APPROBATION

OF THE

RIGHT REV. JOSEPH DWENGER, D. D.

BISHOP OF FORT WAYNE.

VOL. III.

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First Sunday of Advent.

V.

ZEAL OF PENANCE.

"The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." Rom. xiii, 12. The first exhortation of the Church, at the beginning of the New Ecclesiastical Year, is an earnest invitation to do penance. For this purpose she tells us, in the Gospel of the day, of the signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth of the distress of nations, which will precede the Second Advent. Of penance we are reminded by the Epistle, "The night is passed," etc., and even by the violet color of her vestments. St. John, whose life was remarkable for its austerity, is introduced to us preaching the baptism of penance, to which the fasts of Advent invite us also. True, these words of penance inscribed over the entrance of the Ecclesiastical Year are far from being agreeable reading to sensual man. But the Church is bound to preach to all nations and generations the words of St. John: "Do penance; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and the words of the Saviour himself: "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Lk. xiii, 3. That we may comply with the demand of our Lord and God, and fulfill the wishes of the Church, let us meditate on the motives that should induce us to do penance. I take these motives from our vocation as Christians, and from the sinfulness of our lives.

I. OUR VOCATION AS CHRISTIANS.

Nothing is more necessary for a Christian than penance.

1. This is the teaching of Holy Scripture. "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven sufereth violence; and the violent bear it away." Mt. xi, 12. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." xvi, 24. "Bring forth fruit worthy of penance." Lk. iii, 8. "They who are Christ's, have crucified

their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences." Gal. v, 24. As the image of the cross crowns our altars and steeples, as the sign of the cross is used in the administration of the holy sacraments, so the necessity of carrying the cross—performing works of penance—is inculcated throughout the exhortations of the Lord and his Apostles. And whosoever makes no effort to comply with these exhortations, is not worthy of the name of a Christian.

2. For what is it to be a Christian? It is to follow Jesus Christ by imitating his life. "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." John xiii, 15. St. Paul, who, "with Christ was nailed to the cross," could therefore say: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii, 20. Was not the life of our Saviour a life of penance for our sins, from his birth in the stable at Bethlehem, until on the Cross he exclaimed: "It is consummated?"

All his disciples followed him in his life of penance: we know even of tender virgins, whose lives were an incessant combat against human passion. (Thebais.)

3. To be a Christian is to guard the supernatural life implanted in our soul by Jesus Christ. The concupiscence is not destroyed by the Redemption, whence arises the necessity of a continual struggle against our passions. And what is such a struggle but penance? When the desires of the flesh prevail, there is no place for a supernatural life in God, the celestial Dove, the Holy Ghost, not finding whereon to rest.

Hence St. John says: "Love not the world, nor those things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life: which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." I John ii, 15-17. And the Saviour himself says: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent bear it away." Mt. xi, 12. The Spirit of Christianity is aus-

terely supernatural, and wholly incompatible with the desire to see as many happy days and enjoy as many pleasures as possible. Let the world revile the duty of penance, we will remember and fulfill the word of the Lord: "If thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed or lame, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." Mt. xviii, 8.

II. THE SINFULNESS OF OUR LIVES.

The personal motive to do penance is the sinfulness of our own lives.

1. Although a true knowledge of one's self is a rare virtue, every one who casts only a superficial glance at his past life cannot but adopt the words of St. John: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. * * If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar; and his word is not in us." I John ii, 8, 10.

Call to your mind the trespasses of your childhood, the indulgence of the burning passions of your youth, the many injustices and follies of your mature and declining age; remember the sins of your eyes, ears, hands and feet; the sins of the faculties of your soul; and you will exclaim with the Psalmist: "Evils without number have surrounded me: my iniquities have overtaken me, and I was not able to see. They are multiplied above the hairs of my head; and my heart hath forsaken me." Ps. xxxix, 13. And if you examine your conscience according to the ten commandments, from the first, forbidding to adore strange gods, to the last, forbidding to covet your neighbor's goods, are you not bound to say with the Royal Prophet: "Who can understand sins? from my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord; and from those of others spare thy servant." Ps. xviii, 13.

2. Your heart, may be, puts its confidence in virtues you have practiced, and in good works you have performed. But how many of your so-called good works have been performed in the state of grace? Where are those virtues which the alloy of pride, ambition, or self-love has not corrupted and defaced? How

few are those works which we may present to God as pure gold! "Thy own mouth shall condemn thee, and not I, says the Lord; and thy own lips shall answer thee." Job. xv, 6.

3. Must we not confess, too, that most of the sinful habits of our past lives invade our present lives with the resistlessness of a flood? Or will you be bold enough to challenge our Lord to call you at this moment before his judgment seat? "There is no peace in my bones, because of my sins. For my iniquities are gone over my head; and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me." Ps. xxxvil, 4.

I hope that these and similar reflections convince you of the necessity of doing penance. If we desire to enter into the glory of our Lord, we must either be innocent or penitents; we must carry in our hands either the white lily of purity, or the palm of penance. "When we have offended a mighty personage, we are not at rest until by our tears and entreaties we obtain his pardon. Should we not act in like manner when we have enkindled the wrath of our God?" St. Chrysostom.

4. Moreover, penance is an indispensable preservative against future sins. Without penance we are certain to succumb to the tempests of our passions.

Peroration: The beginning of a New Ecclesiastical Year reminds us in a forcible manner of the necessity of penance. How fleeting was the time of the past year! "See therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Eph. v, 15. Keep your lamp trimmed, that the Lord may not say to you, "I know you not." Or will you defer your conversion and penance for another year? "Say not: The mercy of the Lord is great: he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath quickly come from him; and his wrath looketh upon sinners." At the beginning of this New Year the Lord says to us: "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the gate, I will come in to him." Let your Lord wait no longer. "I said: Now have I begun; this is the change of the right hand of the Most High." Ps lxxvi, 11.

Joseph Ehrler.

VI.

RESOLUTIONS ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

The past Ecclesiastical Year was to us a sacred time, that is, a time destined by God for our sanctification. Have we employed the time to advance in virtue? Have we become better Christians? Let us examine our conscience, and whatever be the result of this examination, let us make firm resolutions for the ensuing New Year.

I. IN THE FIRST PLACE, LET US RESOLVE TO DO PENANCE.

1. The Catholic Church exhorts us to it, especially in the time of Advent,

a. By presenting before us a vivid picture of the Last Judgment.

b. By introducing to us the preacher of penance, St. John the Baptist; "the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Isai. xl, 3.

2. In spite of the many warnings by the Church, we have given up our first severity. What is the explanation of this lamentable levity?

a. Our conviction of the necessity of doing penance was too feeble. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Lk. xiii, 3.

b. We were not sufficiently convinced of the severity of penance required. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence: and the violent bear it away." Mt. xi, 12. "You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Heb. xii, 4. "Whoever continues doing that of which he has repented, is a mocker, not a penitent." St. Augustine.

3. You have not this firm resolution of doing penance, unless you are determined:

a. To shun and abandon the occasion of your sin, although your heart should bleed. "If thy right eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out and cast it from thee," etc. Mt. v, 29.

b. To do whatever God commands, however great may be the resistance of your self-love. "Whatever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening." Eccle. ix, 10.

c. To struggle and combat; and to chastise your body. "For he also that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully." II Tim. ii, 5.

d. To pray, and use the other means of salvation. "Watch ye and pray." "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same shall also live by me." John vi, 58.

II. PERSEVERANCE IN TIME OF TEMPTATION.

1. Man and temptation are inseparable. "The life of man upon earth is a warfare." Job. vii, 1. The causes thereof are:

a. Our own nature. As long as life lasts, man is exposed to wicked desires and temptations. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit." Gal. v, 17. "Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured." James i, 14.

b. The world in which we live. To escape temptations coming from outside, "you must have gone out of this world." I Cor. v, 10.

c. The allurements of the devil, who "as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour."

d. The design of God, who suffers his children to be tempted, that he may try and strengthen them.

2. Why is it that we yield so frequently to temptation?

a. Is it necessity? No! "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." I Cor. x, 13.

b. Is it deliberate malice? This is, generally speaking, the case only with those who live according to the morals of those wicked men mentioned in Holy Scripture, who said: "Let

us crown ourselves with roses, before they be withered." Wisd. ii, 8.

c. Is it want of perseverance? It is! Either we did not resist peremptorily the instant the temptation presented itself, but dallied with the bad inclinations, till they overcame us; or, after one victory, we yielded to self-confidence and pride, so that it was an easy task for our adversary to overcome us at a second assault; or we overcame the temptation several times, but as our adversary did not desist from his attacks, we lost courage and resisted no longer.

3. Therefore persevere in resisting temptation, and the victory is yours.

a. Resist resolutely from the commencement. Are you tempted to sensuality, let your resource be flight. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it." Ecclus. iii, 27.

b. Be courageous in the struggle when flight is impossible. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." Philip. iv, 13.

c. Be watchful in humility, although you may have often overcome the temptation. "Watch ye and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mk. xiv, 38.

d. Put your confidence in divine grace, although you may have frequently succumbed to temptation. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezech. xxxiii, 11.

e. Persevere in prayer and in the employment of the other spiritual weapons: works of penance, reception of the holy sacraments, reflection on the eternal reward, &c. "Pray without ceasing." I Thess. v, 17. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." James i, 12.

III. PERFORMANCE OF GOOD WORKS.

Our beatitude during the eternal years commencing from the Day of the Last Judgment, depends:

1. On our perfection, which consists, not in being free from gross vices, but

a. In the possession of all virtues—of the "wedding garment." Cf. Mt. xxii, 12. "For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." John xiii, 15.

b In the possession of many good works, the fruit of these inward virtues. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: for their works follow them." Apoc. xiv, 13; Cf. Mt. xxv, 35.

2. This perfection cannot be acquired except by serious efforts.

If it be so arduous a task to plant only one virtue in the garden of your heart, how much more difficult must it be to plant all virtues in this ground covered with thorns? Ardent zeal is the more required, the further we are from this necessary perfection.

IV. COURAGE IN TRIBULATIONS.

1. These sad consequences of sin are sure to visit every one of us. This earth is a vale of tears. Sometimes the death of our friends causes them to flow. At other times it is misfortune which provokes them. Again the near approach of death, to some of us it may be during this very year that is opening before us, bedews our cheek with bitter tears.

2. Tribulations are to many, not unseldom, the cause of sinning against their neighbor, and against God himself (by denying Divine Providence and by cursing, etc.)

3. Let us, therefore, take courage in tribulations, that they may turn out to our advantage. And what ought to be the source of our courage?

a. Vivid faith in God who reigns over us, and who has the most merciful intentions in whatever trials he suffers us to be subjected to. "We know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good." Rom. viii, 29. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth." Heb. xii, 6. "Here God chastises as a father; hereafter as an inexorable judge." St. Augustine.

b. Firm hope in the divine help, and of an everlasting

reward. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Ps. xlix, 15. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Mt. v, 6.

c. Ardent love to the God-man, who suffered so much out of love for us. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or distress? or famine, or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?" Rom. viii, 35.

Peroration: Let these be our resolutions on this the first day of the New Year, and let the fulfillment of them be our solicitude on every day of this year. Halder.

Second Sunday of Advent.

V.

SINS AGAINST THE WORD OF GOD.

St. John, the precursor of the Lord, had the glorious mission to communicate to men the divine decrees—the word of God. Yet, as far as success was concerned, it was an ungrateful mission. Of the crowds who flocked to hear the word of John on the banks of the Jordan very few came to Christ. The greater number went there to satisfy their curiosity and, consequently, returned unprofited. "John came to you, * * but you seeing it, did not even afterwards repent." Mt. xxi, 32. Others mocked at his person, doctrine, and life. "John came * * * and they say: He hath a devil." Mt. xi, 18. As it was then, so is it now. Continually is the word of God preached by the clergy, and to some of the multitudes who flock to listen to it, it is a consolation and a light on their path, whilst by far the greater number of them sin against the word of God:

I. BY HEARING IT AS THE WORD OF MEN, AND THUS GATHERING NO FRUIT FROM IT.

A. We should hear the word of God

1. *With a faithful heart.*

Let us never lose sight of the following considerations:

a. God speaks through the preacher. He is His oracle. "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, that

speaketh in you." Mt. x, 20. The pulpit is mount Sinai; the preacher is another Moses, prophet and evangelist with a divine mission.

b. Therefore our word is God's word. "He that heareth you, heareth me." Lk. x, 16. "Therefore we also give thanks to God without ceasing: because that when you had received from us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it truly is) the word of God." I Thess. ii, 13. "We are therefore ambassadors for Christ, God as it were exhorting by us." II Cor. v, 20.

2. *With an humble heart.*

The pulpit is

a. A teacher's chair. Come then with a desire to learn.

b. A judgment seat. Come then with the contrite heart of a penitent culprit.

c. A mirror for self-knowledge. Come then without self-love and self-exaltation.

3. *With a zealous heart.*

a. Be desirous of knowing God, his perfections, and his doctrine. "This is life everlasting, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii, 3.

b. Long for the salvation of your soul, your greatest treasure. The word of God is, to her, bread of life, light, staff, oil and wine.

B. How do men usually hear the word of God?

1. *Without faith.* They come only to satisfy their curiosity, to have their ears tickled with luxuriance of thought and pomp of diction. The consequence thereof is, sometimes, that the preacher instead of bread gives glittering stones.

2. *Without humility.* They often come

a. To judge the preacher. As if he were an actor, they applaud or decry him.

b. To judge their neighbor. They apply the word of God to others, but not to themselves. Against others they demand lightning from Sinai; but if it should strike them, they take

offence. Like water over rocky ground, the word of God flows in vain over a proud heart.

3. *Without zeal.* The reason of so many Christians not hungering after the bread of their soul is, because she is languishing under some alarming disease.

How ungrateful toward God, how disrespectful to his word, how painful to the minister of the Gospel is such a state of things!

II. BY DESPISING THE WORD OF GOD, SINCE MANY ARE NOT WILLING TO HEAR IT.

The words of Jesus Christ are our words also: "We seek not our own glory" (John viii, 50), but the honor of him who sent us, and your own salvation. Therefore we denounce your indifference to the word of God. You urge in excuse:

1. The ministers of the Gospel do not fulfill the obligations of their sacred office as they ought to do.

a. If it be so, may not your disobedience and indifference be the cause of the salt having lost its savour, of the light having been extinguished? You should pray that our Lord would send down his Spirit upon his ministers, and value at least the crumbs, and the last spark of the sacred fire.

b. Truth ever commands our respect, whether he who inculcates it be a beggar or a prince. We preach the same doctrines which Jesus and his apostles preached. "Let a man so look upon us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." I Cor. iv, 1.

c. Supposing you yourself put no obstacle in its way, the efficacy of the word of God depends entirely on divine grace. Without this assistance from above, all our efforts are in vain; unless God speaks to the heart of man, even the Chrysostoms and Bernards would be "like sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal;" whilst by the grace of God the weak is powerful. "The weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong." I Cor. i, 27.

2. You say, sermons may be supplied by reading the Holy Bible or devotional books.

a. But do you indeed read those books? I have reason to fear that reading quite different from the above engages your mind.

b. Are you, however, able to dispense with the hearing of the word of God? You are not. The preaching of the word of God is the ordinary means of salvation. By this means the world has been converted. The place, time, and circumstances help in promoting its efficacy. Besides, the Church commands us to hear it, and God's blessing will accompany it: "Where there are two or three gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Mt. xviii, 20.

"Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." Lk. xi, 28.

Tuite de Mac Carthy.

VI.

EXTRAVAGANCE OF DRESS.

Of the virtues of St. John Jesus points out to us especially his mortification, particularly his austerity in dress. The words, "Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings," apply to far more persons than those in the houses of kings. And yet this common extravagance in dress is contrary both to reason and to the spirit of Christianity.

I. IT IS CONTRARY TO REASON.

1. Reason teaches you that the objects of the clothing of the body are:—health, decency, distinction of the sexes and of the state of life. Extravagance, far from being justified by either of these objects, is condemned by them.

2. The cause of the very necessity of clothing ourselves should promote self-humiliation. Man needed no clothing in the state of innocence. He desired to be as God, instead of which, clothed now with garments of skins, he became as an animal.

3. What has your garment to do with your honor and dignity? "As a golden ring in a swine's snout, so is a woman fair

and foolish," says Holy Scripture. If any honor results from clothes, it is rather due to the weaver and tailor. Is not your dress, on the contrary, in many cases, a disgrace, since you carry about publicly your vanity, sensuality, carelessness in contracting debts, etc.?

4. You dissipate your earthly goods. You complain of hard times when you are scarcely able to meet the necessary expenses of your household or to contribute your share in keeping up church and school, *because you indulge in extravagance of dress.*

II. IT IS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

Say not:—"I bought my clothing with my own money; to whom am I accountable for it?" Were an unbeliever to use such language, he might find some excuse; a Christian can find none.

1. In Holy Baptism we renounced all the pomps of the world. How then is luxury in dress compatible with this solemn abjuration, and with the modest garment of innocence received in the sacrament of regeneration?

2. Christian mortification is our duty. But how can the spirit of penance prevail, when your heart is attached to the vanities of the world? "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." Mt. vi, 21.

3. The glory of the world, appropriately called "vanity," does not last. Dives was dressed in costly garments, but "he died, and was buried in hell." Lk. xvi, 22.

4. He that dresses ostentatiously deprives himself of the means of performing charitable works. He needs all for himself, wherefore he will one day hear the words: "I was naked, and you clothed me not." Mt. xxv, 43. Save something from your unreasonable outlay on dress, that you may be able to clothe Jesus in his poor brethren and in his churches. It is a disgrace and shame to Christians, to enter in costly garments the desolated church of their parish, for which they have nothing to spare.

5. Jesus in his life of poverty, as Ecce Homo, and hanging

naked on the Cross, should forcibly deter a sincere Christian from this unworthy passion for dress.

Peroration: Let us rather strive to adorn our soul with virtues. In this sense St. Peter (I iii, 3) exhorts the Christian women: "Whose adorning let it not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit, which is rich in the sight of God."

M. Koenigsdorfer.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

V.

MARY OUR MODEL, AS REGARDS DIVINE GRACE.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception reminds us 1, of our greatest and only misery, the corruption of our nature by reason of sin; 2, of our true happiness—the justification by baptism which we obtained by grace; and 3, of our most stringent duty, to guard and employ well the grace received.

I.

THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN REMINDS US OF THE UNHAPPY CONDITION OF OUR SOUL IN CONSEQUENCE OF SIN.

I. If Mary, like ourselves, had been contaminated with original sin,

1. She would still have been the most exalted creature upon earth. She was

a. Of royal lineage;

b. The most perfect masterpiece of divine Omnipotence, with which nothing could be compared; and

c. Destined to be the Mother of God.

2. Nevertheless she would not have been in her conception the beloved daughter of God, but the object of his hatred. For God does not measure the worth of man by his lineage, nor by

his natural gifts and high destiny, but only by his purity and sanctity.

II. We all know that, unlike to Mary, we are by nature children of wrath, which we recognize as the cause of our misery. We ascribe it to original sin that our understanding is liable to error, that our will is the slave of our passions; that our senses are the gates and instruments of sin; that we are repugnant to the divine will, and hate truth. This great misery is, however, increased through our personal fault, and yet we are not willing to acknowledge it.

1. The deepest abyss of our misery is that, instead of humbling ourselves, we are proud and haughty in our wretchedness. Can you imagine anything more disgusting before God, than the sight of a proud beggar?

2. The excess of our misery is that our corruption is not regarded by us with any uneasiness, that it does not agitate our mind.

3. The marvel of our misery is that we even delight in it, boast of it, and have no desire to be delivered from it.

4. The abuse of our misery is that we use it as an excuse before God, and thus make God the author of our sin.

5. The malice of our misery is that it poisons and destroys all our natural gifts; body, soul, honor, riches, beauty, all are degraded by sin.

6. The abomination of our misery is that, as though not content with being children of wrath by nature and necessity, we make ourselves, of our own accord, such children of wrath, since we obstinately continue committing sins, adding to Original Sin many other sins, not through ignorance or inconsiderateness, but through malice.

7. The abomination of desolation in our misery is that, in spite of baptismal grace, by the power of which original sin was expunged, we commit daily new hereditary sins, more detrimental than the sin inherited from our first parents. Such are the sins of scandal, the sins of omission on the part of parents, superiors, heads of families, which in their effects more than equal *Adam's sin.*

Mary was free from all these sins. She is able and desirous to deliver us from them also. O Blessed Virgin! teach us humility and amendment of life!

II.

THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN REMINDS US OF THE BLESSED CONDITION TO WHICH WE WERE RAISED BY THE GRACE OF BAPTISM.

I. The grace of God was the source of Mary's greatness. This grace was, from the first moment of her conception, fruitful in her.

1. She was continually sanctified more and more, as was becoming for the virgin whom God had chosen to be the mother of his Son. It was becoming that the Father should heap all benefits of grace upon his daughter, the Son upon his mother, the Holy Ghost upon his spouse.

2. All her actions became meritorious in consequence of this first grace conferred upon her, without which she could have gained no merits at all. "If the root be holy, so are the branches." Rom. xi, 16.

II. We are likewise, although in an inferior degree, sanctified by the grace of baptism.

1. By this grace we are sanctified, being made children of God. This grace should be the object of our just pride, and we should prefer it to all worldly honors and prerogatives; which are vain, since they do not render us agreeable before God; perishable, since they are often abused, seldom well used, and render our account more difficult.

2. By this grace all our actions are made meritorious for life everlasting. "If sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Rom. viii, 17. Like Jesus Christ himself, we must by good works gain our heavenly inheritance. But our good works are meritorious only when performed in the state of grace. Otherwise, they are dead works, unfruitful concerning heaven, although they be just in themselves, and in some way useful also.

Alas! even these solemn truths make little impression upon us. Oh! that we might learn from Mary the utmost solicitude with regard to grace!

III.

MARY'S FAITHFULNESS TO GRACE EXHORTS US TO USE GRACE WELL AND TO PRESERVE IT CAREFULLY.

I. Mary is our model as regards the faithful use of grace.

1. She was confirmed in grace, exempt from all inclination to sin, and had nothing to fear. Nevertheless she guarded the grace, of which she could not be deprived, with the utmost circumspection and vigilance, never exposing herself to any danger, but from her childhood to her death leading a solitary life, far from the allurements of the world.

2. Although perfectly innocent, nevertheless she led a life of austere penance. She offered the sacrifice of purification, suffered with her Son, wept over the sins of men, and led a life of self-denial and mortification.

3. Although endowed with superabundant grace, she ever endeavored to augment this grace, increasing daily in virtues and merits. Grace was ever fertile in her.

II. And we, how dissimilar are we to our Blessed Mother!

1. Although so feeble, we nevertheless expose ourselves to all the dangers of the world. "We have this treasure (grace) in earthen vessels." II Cor. iv, 7. Yet, not only are we not afraid in our unavoidable intercourse with the world, but we willfully plunge ourselves into dangers.

2. Although laden with sins and vices, we have nevertheless the pretension to lead a joyful life, as though we had nothing to atone for. We expect joys, when we should expect only labor, humiliation, suffering, and tears, as the penalty of our sins.

3. Although we every moment experience our need of grace, we make no efforts to obtain it. God is liberal, if we ask him for his assistance, and if we are determined to co-operate with his grace. Otherwise, a great measure of grace would only increase our responsibility.

Peroration: Let us value divine grace more than we have heretofore done. Let us remember the misery from which grace has delivered us, the blessings received through it, and especially the minute faithfulness, with which the Blessed Virgin Mary co-operated with every grace received.

Bourdaloue.

VI.

MARY, THE HOPE OF THE HUMAN FAMILY.

"The hope of all the ends of the earth, and in the sea afar off." Ps. lxiv, 6. This day is a day of great joy to all the children of Adam. For she who is "the hope of all the ends of the earth, and in the sea afar off" commenced on this day her spotless life. She is, as her name intimates, the mild star on the ocean of this life, and the heroine of the New Covenant, prefigured by those two valiant women of the Old Covenant, Judith and Esther.

PART I.

MARY IS, IN HER VICTORY OVER THE ENEMY OF GOD'S PEOPLE, THE JUDITH OF THE NEW COVENANT.

I. *Judith of the Old Covenant* gained

1. A *most splendid* victory.

Bethulia was besieged by a great army, "a hundred and twenty thousand footmen, and two and twenty thousand horsemen, besides the preparations of those men who had been taken, and who had been brought away out of the provinces and cities, of all the youth." Jud. vii, 2. "The cisterns, and the reserve of waters failed among all the inhabitants of Bethulia; so that there was not within the city enough to satisfy them, no, not for one day." vii, 11. The people began to despair. "There was great weeping and lamentation of all." vii, 18. In this general distress Judith arose, spoke words of encouragement to the oppressed children of Israel, and announced her resolution to save her nation. But will she be able to perform the heroic

deed, she who had never carried a sword? Confiding in the help of God, she went into the camp of the enemy, and cut off the head of the general, Holofernes. The next morning the Israelites, having hung up the head of Holofernes upon the walls, assaulted and put to flight the Assyrians. "One Hebrew woman hath made confusion in the house of king Nabuchodonosor." xiv, 16.

2. *A most momentous victory.*

What was the fruit of this victory? The city was delivered. "The Assyrians being seized with trembling and fear, thought only to save themselves by flight." xv, 1. The Israelites made great spoils. xv, 7. There was great joy amongst the people. "All the people rejoiced, with the women and virgins; and young men, playing on instruments and harps." xv, 15.

II. *Judith of the New Covenant also gained*

1. *A most glorious victory.*

Who was the enemy? A fallen prince of the angels, of great power, strong as a "lion" (I Pet. v, 8), cruel as a "Leviathan" (Isai. xxvii, 1). In addition to this terrible enemy, there was a numberless host of infernal spirits. Satan had not only besieged Bethulia, but had already conquered, mankind having been subjugated by him. "We were by nature the children of wrath even as the rest." Eph. ii, 3. He had shut up all the fountains of grace. In this sad condition of mankind the heroic Judith of the New Covenant appeared, who had been foretold as the woman that should crush the Serpent's head. Gen. iii, 15. Unspotted and undefiled, she entered the world; the dragon trembled. When she answered to the words of the Angel: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord," the infernal Holofernes felt the sword at his neck. And when Mary ascended the mount of Calvary and gave her Son unto the bloody death, the devil was conquered.

2. *A victory full of blessed consequences.*

What were the consequences of this victory?

a. The salvation of the world. True, Christ is the conqueror of hell; but Mary, according to the Holy Fathers, took

an active part in his victory, no less than Judith did in the victory over the Assyrians. This victory of the Virgin delivered the world from the captivity of hell. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." John xii, 31. "God hath delivered us from the power of darkness." Col. i, 13.

b. The grace of divine sonship. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be named and should be the sons of God." I John iii, 1.

c. The inheritance of life everlasting. "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not, reserved in heaven for you." I Pet. i, 4. Let us honor and praise Mary, the victorious. "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem; thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honor of our people." Jud. xv, 10. Let us be thankful for this glorious victory, to which we owe everything, and let us range ourselves under her victorious banner. "Thy name, O Mary, is my shield; thy succor, my armor; thy help, my sword. Through thee I assault courageously the enemy; through thee I repel him to his utter confusion, and obtain the most magnificent victory." St. John Damascene. Sub tuum praesidium etc.

PART II.

MARY IS, IN HER INTERCESSION, THE ESTHER OF THE NEW COVENANT.

1. Esther of the Old Covenant was

a. The mediatrix of her people.

The Israelites were doomed to extermination. The day had been appointed, when all were to fall under the sword. "Letters were sent by the king's messengers to all provinces, to kill and destroy all the Jews both young and old, little children and women, in one day, that is on the thirteenth of the twelfth month." Esther iii, 13. "The king and Aman feasting together, and all the Jews that were in the city weeping." V, 15. Esther protected her people, who were on the brink of ruin. She interceded with the king, who thereupon said to her: "What wilt thou? if thou shouldst even ask one half of the kingdom, it shall be given to thee." v, 3.

b. She was the deliverer of her people.

Esther's entreaties were granted, and Aman, Israel's deadly enemy, was sentenced to die in their stead. "So Aman was hanged on the gibbet." vii, 10. The letters by which the king had commanded that the Jews should be destroyed, were reversed by new letters. "And in all peoples, cities, and provinces, whithersoever the king's commandments came, there was wonderful rejoicing, feasts and banquets and keeping holy days." viii, 17.

2. *The Esther of the New Covenant.*

a. She is our mediatrix before God's throne.

It is an article of faith that the Saints intercede for us with God. More effectually than the other Saints, does Mary intercede for us. Her love for the human family, and her dignity as mother of all mankind, are the causes of her mediatorship. As mediatrix, she is extolled by all the Holy Fathers. "Mary loves all, assists all, and intercedes for all. She is the mediatrix between God and us." St. Bonaventure.

b. Mary obtains all graces for us.

This consoling truth is the doctrine of the Holy Fathers. "Mary being the mother of the heavenly King, cannot but be heard." St. Bernard. "All graces ever bestowed on mankind, were imparted through Mary's intercession." St. Antoninus. "Whatever thou, O Virgin, implorest, cannot but be granted." St. Anselm. It is confirmed by the experience of all times. Ecclesiastical history, the records of her sacred shrines, and our own lives bear testimony to it.

Peroration: Oh! let us be joyful and thankful, that in Mary we have a mediatrix! Let us foster a filial devotion toward her, and confidently invoke her in all our needs!

Joseph Schuen.

Third Sunday of Advent.

V.

THE DIVINE INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE PROVED FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE.

During the time of Advent, the Holy Church calls on us to do penance for our sins. To obey her call it is above all things necessary that we partake of the Holy Sacrament of penance. For, we cannot, ordinarily, hope for forgiveness of sins except through the ministry of priests, as exercised in the confessional. We know of operations so painful that man prefers death to submitting to them. Confession is as repugnant as one of these to the natural man. It is consequently desirable, nay, necessary, to remind even the children of the Church of the absolute necessity of confessing their sins, if they desire to obtain forgiveness. Setting aside the proof from tradition, I assert that the words of Holy Scripture clearly demonstrate the divine institution of this Sacrament.

I.

In order to arrive at a correct understanding of the meaning of the words spoken by others, we must take into account the usages and manners of the people to whom they were addressed.

1. Our Saviour preached to a people amongst whom the confession of sins before the priests was not only of frequent occurrence, but was, also, enjoined by law as the condition of the forgiveness of certain crimes. Thus, not to mention many other passages, we read in the Mosaic Law: "Say to the children of Israel: When a man or woman shall have committed any of all the sins that men are wont to commit, and by negligence shall have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and offended, they shall confess their sin, and restore the principal itself, and the fifth part over and above, to him against whom they have sinned." Numbers v, 6.

We find, accordingly, the confession of sins generally practised by the Jews on their days of propitiation, and at their sacrifices of atonement, so that even the learned and famous Protestant Grotius concedes that it was not a general, but a particular confession.

2. We cannot wonder, then, if we see particular confession so much in use among the Jews at the time of our Saviour, that when John on the banks of the Jordan exclaimed: "Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Mt, iii, 2,) Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the country about Jordan, went out to him, and as St. Matthew says, "were baptized by him in the Jordan, after they had confessed their sins." Mt. iii, 6.

I maintain then that confession of sins was an established and generally recognized practice among the Jews.

That when our Saviour spoke of confession and forgiveness of sins, every one who heard him understood perfectly well what he meant.

And that it betrays consequently great ignorance to assert that confession was a later invention of the Christian priesthood.

After these preliminary remarks, let us pass on to the words of our Saviour.

II.

Jesus said to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." Mt. xvi, 18.

In a similar way Jesus said to all the Apostles: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." The meaning of these words appears from the context. The Saviour had said immediately before: "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and reprove him. If he will not hear, tell the Church. And if he will not hear

the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." Mt. xviii, 15, 17.

By these words the power is evidently conferred upon the Church and her pastors, *first*, within her communion to forgive or retain sins, and *secondly*, to receive into her communion or to exclude from it.

III.

Yet, irrefragably as the divine institution of the Sacrament of penance is demonstrated by the above words, we have a still more convincing text of Holy Scripture in proof of it.

Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared to his disciples, addressing them in these words: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them, and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained." That you may clearly perceive the demonstrative power of these words, I invite your attention to the following considerations:

1. Jesus Christ does not address his flock at large, but only the pastors of his flock, on whom he confers a special power. This power was intended, not for the Apostles alone, but also for all their successors, according to the self-evident and generally adopted principle, that all powers conferred upon the Apostles for the general benefit of the Church, should be perpetual institutions, as for instance, the administration of baptism, and the preaching of the Gospel.

2. Our Saviour, in the above words, conferred on the Apostles and their successors two powers:

First, to forgive sins. What else can these words mean issuing from the lips of our Saviour? I say, they mean, in reality and truth, to relieve a soul from all guilt in regard to God.

So He said to Mary Magdalen: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." How did those who sat together at the table with him, interpret these words? Evidently of a real absolution before God. For they "began to say within themselves: Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Lk. vii, 48-50.

The following is another incident which supplies testimony to precisely the same effect. Our Saviour said to the palsied man: "Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee." How did the Jews understand these words? Again of a release of guilt before God. For they said within themselves: This man blasphemeth. And what meaning did Jesus apply to his words? The same as the Jews. For seeing their thoughts, he said: "That you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say to thee: Rise up, take thy bed, and go into thy house." Mt. ix, 2-6.

To forgive sins means, therefore, in the mouth of the divine Saviour, to absolve the sinner before God. And when he said to his Apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," he meant to say: "Whose guilt you release, it is released before God."

The *second power* conferred by these words on the Apostles and their successors, is "to retain sins." What this means cannot be doubtful, it means: to withhold the release from the guilt contracted by the sinner before God.

IV.

Having thus established the plain sense of the words of Jesus Christ, let me draw two conclusions of great importance.

I say *first:* If Christ conferred on the pastors of his flock the power to release, or to retain, the guilt incurred by the sinner before God, it follows necessarily, that whosoever is able to receive the Sacrament of penance, cannot ordinarily obtain forgiveness of sins without submitting them to this priestly power.

There is but one exception. Baptism is necessary for salvation, yet there is a baptism of desire. So, also, confession is necessary; yet there is a penance of desire.

This exception admitted, it follows stringently from the words of our Saviour, that the sinner cannot ordinarily save his soul except by sacramental absolution. For if the sins which are retained by the pastors of the Church, are retained before God also, the sins of those, to whom they refuse absolution, or

who do not subject themselves to their tribunal, are retained before God also. Vide Trid. Sess. xiv, can. 6.

The *second conclusion* is this: If the pastors of the Church hold the power to forgive or retain sins, the sinner is obliged to confess his sins with all the circumstances that change their species. No judge has a right to give his decision before investigating the cause. The pastors of the Church are the divinely appointed judges of the faithful, having the stupendous power to forgive or retain sins, to loose or to bind, to open or shut heaven.

What follows? The priest must know the cause, must know, whether the penitent is a great sinner, a contrite, or an obdurate sinner, etc. Therefore the sinner is obliged to confess his sins.

Take this to heart, all ye, who, although acknowledging the necessity of confession, conceal certain sins, or are indifferent as to confessing the number of your grievous sins, or do not make due preparation by examining your conscience. You degrade this institution of divine mercy by making it, as far as in you lies, an institution of sheer arbitrariness.

Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel Ketteler.

VI.

WHO ART THOU?

The Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to John the Baptist, to ask him: Who art thou? He answered: "I am the voice as one crying in the wilderness." Let me put to everyone of you the question: Who art thou? and let me myself give the answer. Who art thou? A highly exalted creature, and an exceedingly wretched creature.

I.

IMMENSE ARE THE PREROGATIVES CONFERRED UPON US

1. *By the grace of creation.*

a. We are the natural images of God.

"In the day that God created man, he made him to the likeness of God." Gen. v, 1. "God created man incorruptible,

and to the image of his own likeness he made him." Wisd. ii, 22. Our soul is an immortal spirit endowed with understanding and free will, wherein the divine image consists. A magnificent prerogative, of which no other creature on earth can boast!

b. We are the rulers and masters on earth.

"God said: Let us make man to our image and likeness and let him have dominion over the whole earth." Gen. i, 26. "God gave man the number of his days and time; and gave him power over all things that are upon the earth." Ecclus. xvii, 3. Man exercises this dominion in fact, although in consequence of sin, it has been greatly limited.

2. *By the grace of redemption.*

a. We are children of the Father in Heaven.

"When the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv, 4, 5. "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: "Abba (Father)." Rom. viii, 15. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be named and should be the sons of God." I John iii, 1. How great then is our dignity!

b. We are brethren of the Divine Son.

Christ "is not ashamed to call them brethren." Heb. ii, 11. "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." Mt. xxv, 40. By taking our flesh, by entering into the human form, the Son of God has become our brother. Stupendous exaltation of our nature! Man made of the slime of the earth, is a brother to Him who reigns world without end.

c. We are temples of the Holy Ghost.

"Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" I Cor. iii, 16. "Or know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God?" I Cor. vi, 19. Infinite grace! Man a temple of the Divine Spirit, a sanctuary of ineffable beauty and magnificence!

3. *By the grace of sanctification.*

a. We partake of celestial life.

By virtue of sanctification we are branches inserted into the Vine Jesus Christ. As such we partake of the celestial life. We draw continually out of the fountain of the merits of Christ, in consequence of which all our good actions are wonderfully ennobled and made worthy of heavenly reward. The cup of cold water, Mt. x, 42.

b. We are heirs of celestial life.

By virtue of her being sanctified, our soul is elevated to the dignity of a bride of Jesus Christ, and if she be faithful, will be led into the nuptial chamber of the heavenly spouse. "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me, that they may see my glory." John xvii, 24. "This is the promise which he hath promised to us, eternal life." I John ii, 25.

How sublime then is our exaltation! "Thou hast made him a little less than the Angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thy hands." Ps. viii, 6. Therefore be proud with noble pride, that you may not trample under foot your high dignity, and that you, the most exalted of all visible creatures, may not, by gluttony and lust, degrade yourself below the level of the brute creation. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul." I Pet. ii, 11. Be thankful. God has given you great things, and has promised you still greater. Forget not so great a blessing. "Give thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light." Col. i, 12. Give thanks every day, especially in the morning and evening. Parents, exhort your children to thank their God.

II.

EXALTED AS MAN IS, HE IS, AT THE SAME TIME, POOR AND WRETCHED.

1. *Concerning his body.*

Our body is no doubt a great master-piece of divine omnipotence. Nevertheless it is, in consequence of sin, a beggarly hovel in its present condition:

a. Subject to many miseries.

"Great labor is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until their burial into the mother of all." Ecclus. xi, 1. Man is first *helpless*. How helpless a creature is a little child! How many years before a man can earn his own bread! Irrational animals are not in the same condition for so long a time. When man has passed the years of his childhood, he begins to be troubled. In the time of his youth the sorrows of life commence, and weigh heavy upon him in his mature age. He must earn his daily bread in the sweat of his brow. His whole life is an uninterrupted struggle against hunger, disease and death. At last man becomes enfeebled. "The days of our years are three score and ten years. But if in the strong they be four-score years; and what is more of them is labor and sorrow." Ps. lxxxix, 10. Behold the old man with his tottering step, every day complaining of new sufferings!

b. Subject to an early death.

The longest human life lasts but a short while. And but few attain old age. Many die in their childhood, or in their youth. Therefore Holy Scripture likens our life to most perishable things, to a spider's web (Ps. lxxxix, 9), to a flower (Job xiv, 1, 2), to a vapor, which appeareth for a little while. (James iv, 15). And when death approaches, how utterly powerless then is man!

2. *Concerning his soul.*

a. His knowledge is very limited.

How blind is man in many things! How little does he know even of natural science! And although his understanding has been enlightened by divine revelation, many problems remain unsolved.

b. His will is feeble.

Alas! a slight temptation, an unguarded glance of the eyes, contempt, mockery, etc., suffice to cause a lamentable fall. To-day we make the firmest resolutions; to-morrow we break them. To-day we swear allegiance to God; to-morrow we join the colors

of his enemies. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I John, i, 8.

Peroration: How feeble then is man! "I am dust and ashes." Gen. xviii, 27. Therefore *make not much of yourself*, of your beauty, strength, and health, they will vanish before long. Make not much of your knowledge and science; they are very limited. Make not much of your piety and virtue; they are very imperfect. "Be not high-minded." Rom. xi, 20. But *trust in God.* He will strengthen you, that you may attain true greatness as his children, and heirs of his heavenly abode. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." Philip. iv, 13.

Joseph Schuen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent.

V.

WHO THEY ARE WHO ARE OFFENDED AND INJURED BY SIN?

As John the Baptist, by preaching the baptism of penance, prepared the way of the Lord, so the Holy Church and her ministers preach the necessity of penance, that the faithful, with cleansed hearts, may prepare the way of the divine Child Jesus. In order to have a deep sorrow for our sins, let us consider, who they are who are offended and injured by them.

I. IN HEAVEN.

1. *God is offended.*

a. The sinner turns from his God—the sovereign, immutable Good—to perishable things; from his rightful Lord to a tyrant; from his Father to his enemy. "Be astonished, O ye heavens. For my people have done two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, that can hold no water." Jerem. ii, 12. Deeply wounded must have been the heart of David, when "all Israel with their whole heart followed Absalom" (II

Kings xv). How much more offensive is it to the heart of God to see the greater part of men abandoning him for the sake of perishable things!

b. The sinner refuses obedience to God, whilst at the same time he places himself under the yoke of Satan. "Thou hast broken my yoke, thou hast burst my bands, and thou saidst: I will not serve." Jerem. ii, 20. "They have transgressed the laws; they have changed the ordinance; they have broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore shall a curse devour the earth." Isai. xxiv, 5.

2. *Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is offended.*

a. The sinner rebuilds what Jesus, by the immolation of himself, has destroyed—sin. "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that shall raise up and build the city of Jericho." Josue vi, 26. Will Christ not curse him who pulls down what He has raised up?

b. He ruins himself and others, whom Christ has bought at the price of his precious blood. How great is the outrage of a son committed against his father, when he goes over to his father's enemies! In the same manner the sinner deals with his Saviour. He renews His wounds, as the executioners did on Calvary, when they stripped Jesus of his garments, thus shedding afresh his precious blood.

c. He despises Jesus Christ, whom he accuses of folly and fraud, since he takes a directly opposite path to the one pointed out by Jesus Christ, as though he had not come to show us the true way leading to heaven.

3. *The Mother of God is offended.*

a. The sinner, by dishonoring the Son, dishonors also his Mother.

b. He pierces her heart with a sword, crucifying her Son anew.

c. He deprives her of an adopted child—himself. She is the mother of all men, having born them to life through her Son. Therefore she intercedes with her Son even for the sinner.

4. *The holy Angels are offended.*

a. The sinner vexes them, by offending their God, whom they love with burning ardor. According to St. Jerome, they are, on that account, ever ready to gather up the cockle. One Angel slew, in his zeal for God's honor, one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. IV Kings, xix, 35.

b. By persevering in sin, he deprives them of the joy they would experience in his conversion. "There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance." Lk. xv, 7.

c. The sinner frustrates their efforts to guard and save him, inducing them to flee weeping from him, as they departed from the temple at the destruction of Jerusalem.

5. *The Saints are offended.*

The sinners betray their Teacher and Father with the kiss of Judas, and deliver him, as far as is in their power, into the hands of his enemies. And they commit those crimes which are an abomination to the Saints.

II. ON EARTH.

1. The sinner sins against the *Church*, by depriving one of her members—himself—of spiritual life; and by infecting her hitherto healthy members with the deadly poison of sin. *Exempla trahunt.*

2. He sins against *his fellow-men*, by bad advice and by giving scandal. The children are often the heirs of their father's crimes. Sons and daughters bring disgrace upon their parents, brothers, and sisters.

3. He sins against *irrational creatures.*

a. He turns them away from God, their Creator, and obliges them to serve His enemy instead of Himself. He employs earthly goods to satisfy his passions, and science, to spread errors, and to commit injustice. "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly." Rom. viii, 20.

b. He interrupts the harmony of the universe. All things are obedient to God's will. The sinner alone makes an exception.

4. He does the greatest injury to *himself*. If all creatures should combine to injure him, they would not be able to inflict on him a damage equal to that he inflicts himself on his own soul. He kills his soul, is deprived of all good works of the past, and is henceforth fuel for hell. "He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul." Ps. x, 6. "They that commit sin and iniquity, are enemies to their own soul." Tobias xii, 10.

Peroration: Thus deplorable are the consequences of sin! What marvel, when we hear St. Chrysostom say: "Sin is worse than the devil!" Oh! let us repent of the past, and take earnest heed for the remainder of our life!

M. Faber.

VI.

REAL VALUE OF THE RICHES, HONORS, AND PLEASURES OF THE WORLD.

The Gospel of to-day brings before us such men as Tiberius, Pilate, and Herod, who were in the enjoyment of the honors, riches, and pleasures, of the world. In contrast to them, it mentions a man who, in the desert, led a life of uncommon austerity—St. John the Baptist. The former were the enemies of God, whilst John was the "friend of the bridegroom." And yet the world called those happy, whilst it pitied the Baptist in his poverty. Let us then investigate to-day what judgment a Christian should form about the riches, honors, and pleasures of the world.

I. RICHES.

Those who have succeeded in accumulating wealth, are called happy by men. "They have called the people happy, that hath these things." Ps. cxliii, 15. Yet riches are

1. *Vain and perishable.*

a. Experience teaches, that rich men are often assailed by misfortune and reduced to poverty. Job may serve as a biblical example.

b. Death, an unwelcome visitor, who is, however, sure to come, deprives us of all earthly possessions. "When the rich man shall die, he shall take nothing away; nor shall his glory descend with him." Ps. xlviii, 18. "Whom does death spare on account of his wealth?" St. Basil.

2. *Frequently an obstacle in the way of eternal salvation.*

a. They are in many cases instruments of injustice, pride, and other vices. "Money is perilous to the owner, an evil master, and a treacherous servant." St. Chrysostom.

b. They often blind man's spiritual eyes, so that he forgets the everlasting goods. "They who would become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition." I Tim. vi, 9. "The rich man died; and he was buried in hell." Lk. xvi, 22.

II. HONORS.

Man is very prone to crave for glory and honor. "Not to covet vain glory, requires much self-command, and is granted only to bright angelic souls." St. Chrysostom. True, real honor is a great boon. "Take care of a good name; for this shall continue with thee, more than a thousand treasures precious and great." Ecclus. xli, 15. But the irregulated striving after the honors of this world is foolish and hurtful. For worldly honors are

1. *Vain and perishable.*

a. They are often lost even during one's lifetime. The glory earned from men disappears like smoke. "There is an abasement because of glory; and there is one that shall lift up his head from a low estate." Ecclus. xx, 11.

b. They are surely lost at the hour of death. Cardinal Hugo illustrates this by the following simile. "As the rivers, before they empty themselves into the ocean, bear various names, which they lose as soon as they empty themselves into the ocean, thus man loses name, and titles, and honors, as soon as he departs into eternity."

2. *Perilous to the salvation of our soul.*

"Vain glory is a short intoxication; he who addicts himself to it, is not easily healed; for it infects our soul." St. Chrysostom. "Let us not become desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Gal. v, 26.

III. SENSUAL PLEASURES.

Man runs with avidity after sensual pleasures and amusements. Yet they are

1. *Vain and transient.*

a. They seem to be joys, but in reality are not. "I saw in all things vanity, and vexation of mind, and that nothing was lasting under the sun." Eccle. ii, 11.

b. They are often detrimental to honor, health, and prosperity.

c. They last only a short time. "They who use this world, be as if they used it not: for the figure of this world passeth away." I Cor. vii, 31.

2. *Perilous to salvation.*

a. Precious time is frittered away.

b. They are either sinful in themselves, or lead frequently to sin. "Woe to you that laugh now: for you shall mourn and weep." "Lust is the devil's hook, wherewith he draws us to the abyss." St. Ambrose. "That which delights, is momentary; that which torments, is everlasting." St. Chrysostom.

Peroration: St. John was then right in despising the delights of the world. We should act in like manner. "Let us walk honestly as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." Rom. xiii, 13.

Kienle.

Christmas Day.

V.

JESUS' LOVE OF POVERTY.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it." John i, 5. The Child Jesus is even in his manger a light that shineth in darkness, teaching us the sublimest truths. The first truth which he is anxious to impress on our mind, is expressed in the words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Mt. v, 8. Let us then see how Jesus by his example and word teaches the love of poverty, and wherein the poverty consists, which Jesus loves so tenderly.

I. HIS EXAMPLE.

No one of us has chosen the circumstances of his birth. One is born in a poor hut, the other in a magnificent palace.

Our Saviour, being God as well as man, could have surrounded his human nature with a splendor surpassing human powers of conception. He "who so clothes the lilies of the field, that not even Solomon, in all his glory, was arrayed as one of them," could have clad his human body in a beauty far transcending that of all the lilies and flowers upon earth. He who created the precious stones and the glittering gold in the veins of the earth, and who gives the sun and the stars their splendor, could have built for himself a palace, compared with which all palaces of men were mere hovels. But more than the beauty of flowers, more than the gorgeous glitter of diamonds and gold, more than the magnificence of palaces, more than the splendor of the sun, he loved poverty. He would be born as the spouse of poverty, and the brother of the poor in spirit. In place of a palace he chose a stable; instead of wealthy parents he chose a poor mother and a poor foster-father; instead of a royal couch, a manger; instead of a bed of down, a handful of straw; instead of comfortable warmth, the cold of a winter night. In poverty came the Expected of nations into the world, in poverty he

lived all his lifetime, in poverty he died on the Cross. His whole life teaches us his love of poverty.

II. HIS WORD.

As Jesus commenced his earthly life with poverty, so his first doctrine preached in his Sermon upon the Mount was: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," thus intimating that, unless we be poor in spirit, we are not even able to understand his doctrine.

Jesus taught the same to the young man, who having great possessions, asked him: "Good master, what good shall I do, that I may have life everlasting?" He said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, and follow me." Mt. xix, 21. And when, thereupon, Peter inquired: "Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee: what, therefore, shall we have?" Jesus said: "Amen, I say to you, that you, who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall possess life everlasting." Mt. xix, 27-29.

This divine Spouse of poverty has also pointed out in the strongest terms the danger of worldly wealth. "Woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation. Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger." Lk. vi, 24. "Amen, I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. xix, 33. Such is the doctrine of poverty, as Jesus has taught it by example and word.

III. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN POVERTY.

Now the question arises, Wherein does the poverty, without which we cannot be saved, properly consist; or, in other words, who are the poor in spirit? To give a correct answer to this question, we distinguish four classes of men.

1. The first class comprises those who have both the riches of this world and the love of them. Those men are in most cases avaricious also. "No one," says St. Francis of Sales, "will concede his being avaricious; and the most avaricious men will deny that they are avaricious. But," the Saint continues, "if you long continually, vehemently, and with disquietude for the goods of the world, whatever you may say, you are truly avaricious, as he who continually, vehemently, and with disquietude, desires to drink, shows that he has a fever. Men of this description are the farthest from Jesus Christ, and to them the word of the Lord emphatically applies: "Woe to you that are rich;" or, as St. Francis of Sales says: "Christ calls the poor in spirit blessed; in consequence, cursed are the rich in spirit, for theirs is the torment of hell." Philothea iii, 14.

2. The second class comprises those who are enamoured with worldly goods, which, nevertheless, they do not possess; those who live in want, but continually, vehemently, and with disquietude, long for the riches of which they are destitute. To them, also, the words are addressed: "Woe to you that are rich." These men are in a worse condition than those who belong to the first class; for the latter have, at least, their reward on earth, whilst the former have only the torment of an ungratified desire.

3. The third class comprises those who, although endowed with worldly wealth, preserve, nevertheless, poverty of spirit; who abound in temporal goods, but make good use of them, and are free from a lasting, vehement, and disquieting, attachment to their possessions. Jesus does not demand of everyone to sell whatever he has, and give it to the poor; many are even not allowed to do so, because the sacred duty to provide for their family is incumbent on them. They may, however, love and practise poverty in spirit, and then to them the words apply: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

4. The fourth class comprises those who to temporal poverty unite poverty of spirit. Some of these are poor from their birth, or have become so through misfortune; some have once

possessed large estates, which they have distributed to the poor, in order, of their own accord, to take their place with them. Oh! that the poor would recognize how priceless a treasure is hidden in their poverty, if they be content with their condition, and joyfully embrace poverty for the sake of Christ! The world having neither joys nor consolation for those who are poor, doubly unhappy are they who forfeit the blessing belonging to poverty by discontent and injustice. Christ repudiates them for their wickedness; the world, for their poverty. But nothing on earth is more meritorious and more admirable than poverty united with piety. Whoever possesses this treasure, approaches the nearest to Jesus, whom he resembles in spirit as well as in outward condition; and his poverty, with its many privations, is to him the source of countless merits.

Peroration: Such is poverty as preached by Jesus in the Manger, and in words. Ye that are rich, contemplate your Saviour in the crib. How forcibly he addresses to you the words: "Woe to you that are rich!" Woe to you whose hearts are in your riches. Woe to you who are poor, but who loathe your lot, and crave inordinately for the riches of which you are deprived! Woe to you! for the Divine Infant cannot recognize you as his own; yours is eternal condemnation. But blessed are you who, although possessed of earthly goods, in spirit are not attached to them; still more blessed are you who, deprived of this world's goods, are poor, also, in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven!

Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel Ketteler.

VI.

THE INFINITE ABASEMENT.

The bounty and kindness of God towards men was great at all times, but never so great as when he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, to deliver them from sin and ruin. Let us meditate on this grace, in order to encourage and stimulate our efforts to show our gratitude to him by faithful co-operation with the merits of Jesus Christ.

The greatness of this grace is manifest

I. FROM THE GREATNESS OF HIM WHO WAS SENT.

1. *Great is his name:*

a. Son of God. "A voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Lk. iii, 22. "And this is his commandment: that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ." I John iii, 23.

b. The *only-begotten* Son of God. "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." John iii, 16.

c. King of kings. "They shall fight with the Lamb; and the Lamb shall overcome them, because he is the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings." Apoc. xvii, 14. "And he hath on his garment and on his thigh written: King of kings, and Lord of lords." xix, 16.

d. Creator. "All things were made by him; and without him was made nothing that was made." John i, 3. "For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and in him." Col. i, 16.

e. One with the Father. "I and the Father are one." John x, 30. "In these days He hath spoken to us by his Son * * * the splendor of his glory, and the figure of his substance." Heb. i, 2, 3.

2. *Infinitely powerful.* "All things are delivered to me by my Father." Mt. xi, 27. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." Mt. xxviii, 18.

3. *Having all attributes of perfection,*

He is

a. Eternal. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John i, 1.

b. Almighty. "He is able to subdue all things unto himself." Philip. iii, 21.

c. Omniscient. "Now we know that thou knowest all things." John xvi. 30. "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." xxi, 17. "All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts." Apoc. ii, 23.

d. The Judge of the world. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then will he render to every man according to his works." Mt. xvi, 27.

e. The light of the world. "I have given thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Isai. xlii, 6. "My eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles." Lk. ii, 30-32. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." John i, 4.

II. FROM THE ABASEMENT OF HIM WHO WAS SENT.

He abased himself

1. *To the humblest condition.*

He was

a. Poor. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Mt. viii, 20. The Manger. The Stable at Bethlehem.

b. Despised. "I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people." Ps. xxi, 7. "And platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head." Mt. xxvii, 29.

2. *To the most wearisome life.* Call to mind his labors, journeys, persecutions, etc.

3. *To the most ignominious death.* Mt. xxvii, 38. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of law, being made a curse for us; for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal. iii, 13.

III. FROM THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE WAS SENT.

He was sent

1. *To suffer for man.* "Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows. * * * He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins." Isai. liii, 4. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Heb. xiii. 12.

2. *To blot out the sins of the world.* "Behold the Lamb of God; behold, he who taketh away the sin of the world." John i, 29. "For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God; being justified gratis by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom. iii, 23.

3. *To bestow innumerable benefits on man.* "Ascending on high, he led captivity captive: he gave gifts to men." Eph. iv, 8. And how many are these gifts of body and soul!

Peroration: Let us then, with a joyful heart, thank God, that the Saviour was born to us. Let us procure for ourselves from his gracious advent all the benefits it was designed to bring to us, by conforming ourselves to his image, that we may be children of God, as Jesus has become the child of man.

Tirinus.

Sunday After Christmas.

V.

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

The Son of God became a child, and lived a retired life for thirty years, being obedient to his foster-father, and to his blessed Mother, to teach children, by his divine example, their duties towards their parents. Let me then remind you, ye children, of your obligations to your parents. You owe to your parents honor. God gave from mount Sinai the command to all children: "Honor thy father and thy mother." I will, then, explain to you, why and how children should honor their parents.

I. WHY SHOULD CHILDREN HONOR THEIR PARENTS?

Because God commands, and parents deserve it.

1. *God commands it.*

a. He has inscribed this commandment in the heart of every man. Hence we do not know of any people, however rude they may have been, amongst whom respect of parents did not obtain. Solon, one of the greatest lawgivers of ancient times, when asked why he allotted no punishment to those who treated their parents with irreverence, gave the remarkable answer: "Because I deem it impossible that a child should ill-treat his father and mother." In China, parents, although they frequently treat their children with unnatural cruelty, and expose their new-born babes to certain death, are the objects of profound veneration, of which the Emperor himself gives a conspicuous example. Therefore, ye sons and daughters, if you refuse your parents the honor due to them, you are worse than Gentiles.

b. God gave from mount Sinai, amidst thunder and lightning, the fourth commandment: "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother." In the course of time he repeated this commandment, exhorting children to observe it, partly by promises, partly by threatenings.

c. When the Son of God became man, he enjoined upon children the same duty. "God said: Honor thy father and thy mother. And he that shall curse father or mother, let him die the death." Mt. xv, 3-4. His Apostle St. Paul writes: "Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is just. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promises; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon the earth." Eph. vi, 2-3.

d. Look upon Jesus, your model. Did he not honor his Mother, by changing water into wine at her request, by showing his tender care of her, even amidst the agonies of his death on the Cross, and by elevating her above the angels in heaven? He honored St. Joseph, also, whom, although a poor carpenter, he chose for his foster-father, suffering himself to be regarded as his son, and obeying him as if he were indeed his father. Jesus says to you, ye children: "I have given you an example (during thirty-three years), that as I have done to you, so you do also." John xiii, 15.

e. Lastly, remember the terrible punishments awaiting children who dishonor their parents. God curses them saying: "Cursed be he that honoreth not his father and mother; and all the people shall say: Amen." Deut. xxvii. 16. This curse frequently visited wicked children in their lifetime. Ophni and Phinees, who despised their father Heli, were both killed at the same time. Absolom's perfidious heart was pierced, and for many years the Israelites passing by his tomb cast stones upon it. And if such children should escape their deserved punishment on earth, they will be chastised the more severely in the next world, if they die in their sins. St. Peter says that God reserves unto the day of judgment to be tormented especially those who despise governments. II Pet. ii, 9-10. But to children parents hold the first and principal place of government.

2. *Parents deserve to be honored by their children.*

a. By natural and written law it is imposed upon us to honor aged persons, because they are older than ourselves. "Rise up before the hoary head, and honor the person of the

aged man." Lev. xix, 32. And the Apostle enjoins upon Timothy: "An ancient man rebuke not, but entreat him as a father; old women, as mothers." I Tim. v, 1. Those forty-two boys who mocked at the prophet Eliseus, were torn to pieces by bears. How much more abominable is it to despise those whose blood flows in your veins, and by whose labors your life is sustained? "The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth the labor of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brooks pick it out, and the young eagles eat it." Prov. xxx, 17.

b. The sin of irreverence appears so much greater, if we regard the dignity of parents. When you were of tender age, you were supported and kept alive by your parents. Almighty God could have supported you without their aid; but he placed them in his stead. Now if an offense committed against the ambassador of a king, is considered as committed against the king himself, the offense against your parents is against God himself. Therefore Holy Scripture says: "He that feareth the Lord honoreth his parents, and will serve them as his masters." Ecclus. iii, 8.

II. HOW SHOULD CHILDREN HONOR THEIR PARENTS?

They should treat them with reverence, never be ashamed of them, and bear patiently their imperfections and faults.

1. "Honor thy father in work and word." Ecclus. iii, 9. Children, who conscientiously observe this admonition of the Holy Ghost, speak to their parents in all modesty, and obey them in all deference. They defend their honor against all calumniators. In all important matters they ask their advice. In this and similar ways all good children have manifested their reverence toward their parents: Sem and Japhet, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Solomon. How is your conduct, my dear children? Why is it that I hear your parents so often complain of you as being stubborn, arrogant, and impudent? Are you not afraid to share the fate of Cham, who was cursed with all his offspring? Oh! invite no longer the wrath of God.

2. Far be it from you to be ashamed of your parents. Your parents ought to be venerable to you, whatever be their

earthly condition, or the condition of their souls. As the image of the Crucified, although it be made of inferior metal, is ever venerable on account of its being a representation of the Son of God, so your parents, although they may have many faults, are worthy of your homage. The fourth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," admits of no exception. "Remember thy father and thy mother, when thou sittest in the midst of great men, lest God forget thee in their sight." Ecclus. xxiii, 18. Joseph, although governor of Egypt, was not ashamed of his poor father, but embraced and kissed him, and shed tears of joy in sight of the nobles of the kingdom. Sir Thomas More, the great chancellor of England, showed the greatest filial reverence to his father, who held a far inferior position, whenever an opportunity was offered him of doing so.

3. Bear patiently the imperfections and faults of your parents. For such is the will of God, who says: "Honor thy father in all patience." Ecclus. iii, 9. Very aged parents sometimes cause their children great trouble. In such cases you should observe the word of the Holy Ghost: "Son, support the old age of thy father, and grieve him not in his life. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy strength: for the relieving of the father shall not be forgotten." Ecclus. iii, 14. How great trouble did you cause your parents in your childhood!

There are parents who have their moral faults also. Children have a right to admonish them, but with all modesty and reverence. Show to them your filial reverence, especially by praying for them without ceasing. This admonition should be heeded, particularly by children who have an unkind and unjust stepfather or stepmother.

Peroration: I grieve to think how many children there are who, by their conduct, show that they deem themselves exempt from the duty of filial reverence toward their parents, as soon as they become of age. This is not christian, is not just. Tobias said to his son: "When God shall take my soul, thou shalt bury my body; and thou shalt honor thy mother all the days of her life." Tob. iv,

3. How great was the homage king Solomon paid to his mother! He erected a throne for her at the right side of his own throne, and said: "My mother ask: for I must not turn thy face." III Kings ii, 20. In our own times, however, what is more common than to hear Christian sons and daughters call their father "the old man," and their mother "the old woman?" Shame! Oh! that you would listen to the warning of the Holy Ghost: "Honor thy father, in work and word, and all patience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end." Ecclus. iii, 10.

J. E. Zollner.

VI.

CHRIST IS SET FOR THE RUIN OF MANY.

Although "God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him," (John iii, 17) yet he is set for the ruin of many. How terrible, yet how true is this prophecy of Simeon!

I. HOW TRUE IS THIS PROPHECY!

Undoubtedly the Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save. Lk. ix, 56. In boundless love he has sacrificed himself for the world, and opened heaven by his cruel death. Nevertheless he is set to the ruin of many.

I. *Many are destitute of holy faith.*

1. Christ has demanded, as the fundamental condition of salvation, faith in his Gospel and in his Church. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." Mk. xvi, 16; Cf. John viii, 24. St. Chrysostom, accordingly, calls faith "the gate of life, and ground of eternal salvation."

2. Does the world believe the Gospel?

a. If you enquire *outside of the Church*, you find multitudes who prostrate themselves before idols, not knowing the

only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. Multitudes still profess the Jewish religion, "the veil being upon their heart." II Cor. iii, 15. There are many who select only fragments of the Gospel to believe in them, the darkness of unbelief being upon them, of heresy and error. * * * Christ is set for the ruin of all these, if through their own grievous fault they have left or refused to walk in the path of truth. These all will, one day, hear the sentence: "I know you not."

b. If you search *within the pale of the Church*, you find many who have suffered shipwreck in their faith:—doubters, indifferentists, scoffers of religion. They are cursed by God. "The wrath of God cometh upon the children of unbelief." Col. iii, 6.

II. *Many are destitute of divine charity.*

1. Faith alone will not save you.

a. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. vii, 21. Faith must be animated by charity consisting in the faithful observance of the divine law. "If you love me, keep my commandments." John xiv, 15.

2. Does the world love God?

a. Few men fulfill the law of the Lord. The number of the faithful followers of Jesus Christ is very limited. The greater part of men are lost in lukewarmness, and despise the will of God.

b. Many outrage the divine law. Alas! the number of the intemperate, blasphemous, and unchaste, is beyond reckoning. But "he that loveth not (by observing the commandments) abideth in death." I John iii, 14. He abides in the death of hell. Thus is Christ the ruin of many. "If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin." John xv, 22. In no case, however, can man reproach the Saviour; the guilt falls upon his own head.

II. HOW TERRIBLE IS THIS PROPHECY!

How dreadful are the consequences to those for the ruin of whom Christ is set!

I. They forfeit the price of their redemption.

1. "God sent his Son, that he might redeem those who were under the law." Gal. iv, 4. God the Son has chosen the ignominy of the cross, and sacrificed his blood for the sinful human race.

2. This work of infinite charity does not profit those who are lost. The precious price of redemption is lost; all the labors and sufferings for thirty-three years are lost; so many groanings, so many tears, so many drops of blood are lost.

II. They lose the eternal happiness destined for them.

1. "Jesus Christ is on the right hand of God, swallowing up death, that we might become heirs of life everlasting." I Pet. iii, 22. He has purchased for us an infinite beatitude, consisting in the eternal possession of God, and the fruition of unspeakable joys. "In heaven there is all that is loved, and nothing is desired that is not there." St. Augustine.

2. If the soul falls into eternal ruin, this celestial beatitude is no more for her. She will continually long for it, but all in vain. "I have sworn in my wrath: they shall not enter into my rest." Heb. iii, 11.

Peroration: Shall this dreadful misfortune befall us also? Shall the price of redemption and eternal happiness be lost for us also? Shall He who was pierced on the cross, meet us with the sword of justice? And instead of rejoicing in the society of angels, shall we despair for ever among devils? In order to prevent this calamity, let us firmly believe in Christ and his doctrine, and keep his commandments.

Joseph Schuen.

New Year's Day.

V.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

"And after eight days were accomplished that the Child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus." Lk. ii, 21. Let us put our confidence in this holy name of Jesus. Let us enter upon the new year in this holy name. We do so, if we verify in our regard the common salutation on this day: "A Happy New Year!" Let me, then, remind you of what we have to do, in order that this kind greeting of our friends may be realized by us.

I. A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

1. He that clings to God, is truly happy.

a. Happy is he whose wishes are fulfilled. How can this ever be realized on earth, since the eye is not sated by seeing, nor the ear by hearing, and the desires of man never come to a termination? In one way only can it be realized. God alone is infinite, and is, therefore, alone able to fill the void of our hearts. He who has resigned his will to the will of God has his wishes fulfilled, since he wills nothing but what God wills, and "to them that love God, all things work together unto good." Rom. viii, 28.

b. If God sends him tribulations, he accepts the bitter cup at his hands as a means of probation, and of acquiring greater merits. And if wicked men are the cause of his tribulations, he knows that no harm can be done him without God's permission. Job, far from cursing the Sabeans and Chaldeans, or even Satan, said with resignation: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." Job. i, 21.

2. He, however, who searches after happiness out of God is guilty

a. Of the greatest injustice and ingratitude, since He has condescended to enable us to enjoy him as our supreme beatitude—an infinite grace indeed!

b. Of the grossest error, since God alone can render us truly happy, our hearts being created for him, and all created things being but vanity and vexation of spirit.

II. A NEW YEAR.

1. How frequently are we admonished to become new creatures, being renewed in the spirit! "Put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth. Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor," etc. Vide Eph. iv. 22 ff.

2. This renewal is necessary:

a. Principally to the sinner. Otherwise, he has no "*new*" year, and runs the risk of exhausting the divine longanimity, and of being lost for ever.

b. To the just also. "He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still." Apoc. xxii, 11. He who does not go forward, goes backward.

3. This "renewal" consists in true amendment of life. Jonas had threatened Ninive with destruction, and yet the city was saved. Was then Jonas a lying prophet? St. Augustine justifies him, saying, that Old Ninive, which was wicked, was destroyed, and in its place New Ninive, which was converted, was founded. On account of this conversion, God spared also the houses and goods of the inhabitants—a striking illustration of the blessing which will result from such renewal.

4. *Examples:* David, who through the want of custody of his eyes fell so deeply, after his conversion employed his eyes to weep over his sins. Magdalene devoted her hair no longer to the gratification of her vanity, but to wiping therewith the feet of her Lord; her body no longer to lust, but to chastisement.

III. A YEAR.

1. How important is this period of time—a year!

a. If we consider it in relation to *our life*, it is a con-

siderable part of it, and many good and evil deeds can be performed therein.

b. If we compare it *with eternity*, to us who are on the pilgrimage toward eternity, one year appears like a passing dream. Yet it contains many thousand hours, each of which may decide our eternal destiny.

2. Only a year well employed will be to us a year in the true sense of the word. Holy Scripture says of the just man that he died "full of days," and of him who died in his youth, that he had "filled out many times." But Isaias speaks of "an old man that shall not fill up his days." In order that the ensuing year may be, in the truest sense, a "year" to us, we should pass it

a. In the state of grace. For all days passed in the state of sin, without confession and penance, are lost days.

b. In the performance of good works, that we may not share the fate of the barren figtree. Not only he, who does evil deeds, but also he who does no good deeds, has lost his time.

c. With a good intention, which imparts to all works their real value. "If I have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal * * * I am nothing." I Cor. xiii, 1.

Peroration: Count your years according to this rule; and judge how few are the days of your last year, how few the years of your life, which you are justified in calling your own? Oh! that you might employ at least this year of grace in such a manner that it may be inscribed in the book of life as "a happy new year!"

Bordoni.

VI.

REFLECTIONS ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Among the Gentiles the custom prevailed of solemnizing the different changes of time partly by superstitious ceremonies, partly by wild and dissolute frivolity. St. Paul reproaches the

Galatians with addicting themselves to these pagan usages, saying: "You observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am in fear for you, lest perhaps I have labored in vain among you." Gal. iv, 10. It ought not to be so among Christians. Let us make a good beginning of the new year by not merely offering the usual congratulations, still less by enjoying sinful amusements, but making serious reflections, and good resolutions.

I. SERIOUS REFLECTIONS.

Whilst wishing one another a Happy New Year, we should reflect

1. On the *object* of this wish. Wherein does true happiness consist, that happiness which is independent on the inevitable vicissitudes of life, and is within the reach of both the rich and the poor? Wherein else but in the fear of the Lord, in the inward peace of our soul?

2. On the period of *time* to which this wish extends. Can the year be happy, when you render yourselves and your fellowmen unhappy? Can the time be good, when men are wicked? Our wishes for the year concern properly ourselves, that is to say, we wish that, during the new year, we may be good, and thereby happy, men.

3. On the *day* when we utter this greeting. It is a civil festival, and a day of great joy. But if you desire to enjoy truly this day, celebrate it with a renewed heart. "Let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." I Cor. v, 8. Let not an evil year follow this joyful day. He who preserves a good conscience celebrates a continual feast, prepared by the peace of the soul and by the hope of heaven; whereas wicked men never enjoy true happiness, for the words of Holy Scripture apply to them: "Their days were consumed in vanity, and their years in haste." Ps. lxxvii, 33.

II. GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

1. Let us strive for everlasting goods, as we are admonished

a. By the Word of God. "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth." Col. iii, 1. We read this exhortation almost on every page of the Holy Bible.

b. By our own advantage. If the past year reminds us of the perishable nature of all earthly things, how foolish are we not to recognize the infinite advantage of seeking first and most earnestly the things which will last for ever!

2. Let us perform all our works for the honor of God, and sanctify our daily task by a good intention. "Do all things for the glory of God." I Cor. x, 31. How many opportunities are offered us to honor God! Honor him

a. On his days, in his house, in his word, and holy mysteries.

b. In his ministers, the Saints, and pious Christians, by honoring them and following their footsteps; and by recommending yourselves to their intercession.

c. In the poor, sick, and strangers, by assisting them for the love of God.

d. In your household, by promoting good and preventing evil; and by keeping holy the conjugal state of life.

e. In society, by avoiding bad society, and rebuking blasphemies and scandals.

f. In all things, by doing them for the glory of God. Vide I Cor. x, 31.

How happy will this new year be to us, if we begin and finish it in this good spirit!

St. Chrysostom.

Sunday After New Year.

V.

CHILDREN, LOVE YOUR PARENTS.

The flight of St. Joseph and of the Blessed Virgin and their sojourn in Egypt, caused by the cruel persecution of Herod directed against the Divine Child confided to their care, reminds us of the great and many cares which pious parents take of their children, in order to protect them against their numerous enemies. Your welfare, Christian children, is the tenderest object of your parents' care, for which you owe them your heart-felt gratitude. But since you are not able to thank them for it as they deserve, you should at least love them from the depth of your hearts. In order to remind you of this duty, I will explain, why and how children should love their parents.

I. Children, love your parents; for you have the strongest motives for loving them, and no excuse whatever for refusing them your love.

1. *The motives for loving your parents:*

a. The instinct of nature prompts you to do so. "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the birds of the air, and they shall tell thee. Speak to the earth, and it shall answer thee, and the fishes of the sea shall tell thee." Job xii, 7. Not only domestic animals, but also wild beasts display a tender feeling toward their parents. This instinct is imparted to them by the Creator. We observe the same in the little child that smiles at his mother. Man, being endowed with liberty, can act against this natural impulse; but by doing so, he degrades himself below the level of the brute, and makes himself a monster in God's creation.

b. We are commanded by *natural law* to love our parents. The Gentiles recognized this law inscribed in their hearts. "We are never able," says Aristotle, "to return sufficient thanks and love to God and our parents." The great

emperor Konghi of China had a large volume published on filial love, to which he himself wrote the preface. Plinius Junior, during an eruption of Vesuvius, saved his mother from being burned to death at the risk of his own life. Will you suffer the Gentiles to surpass you in this virtue? "He that afflicteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is infamous and unhappy." Prov. xix, 26.

c. Moreover, *the written law* obliges *children* to love their parents:

In the *Old Testament* we read: "Son, support the old age of thy father; and grieve him not in his life. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy strength: for the relieving of the father shall not be forgotten." Ecclus. iii, 14. It shall not be forgotten indeed: for to those who love their parents God has promised great rewards, whilst those who love them not he has threatened with his curse and their ruin. "He that honoreth his father shall have joy in his own children; and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard." Ecclus. iii, 6. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth the labor of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brooks pick it out, and the young eagles eat it." Prov. xxx, 17. These blessings and these curses of the Lord are no empty sounds, as we see in the examples of Sem and Japhet, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph; of Cain, Cham, Absalom, Ophni and Phinees.

In the *New Testament* the same duty is enjoined upon children. Is not the love of our neighbor the characteristic feature of a Christian? "The second commandment is like to the first: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Mt. xxii, 39. "If any man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar." I John iv, 20. We are commanded to love even our enemies, under the penalty of eternal death. Mt. v, 44; Mk. xi, 26. Now draw the conclusion yourselves, ye sons and daughters. If the commandment to love our neighbor, nay our enemy, is the indispensable condition of salvation, how urgent must then be the commandment to love our own parents? Follow then the example

of the Son of God, who, when plunged into a sea of pains, remembered his mother. "Behold thy mother!" John xix, 27.

2. *The commandment to love your parents admits of no excuses.*

a. "Why should I love my parents? They do not love me, but always give the preference to my brothers and sisters." This is a common complaint. Although I am not inclined to excuse those foolish parents who have their "petchildren," yet may it not be your bad conduct, and not your person, that displeases your parents? Jacob loved his son Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the best child. Suppose, however, that your parents, without sufficient cause, display no affection towards you, the Fourth Commandment applies to you notwithstanding. In such a case Christian charity demands that you should bear patiently their unjust dealing. In early Christendom it was of frequent occurrence that parents delivered their own children to the executioner because of their Christian faith. These holy children avenged themselves by praying for the conversion of their cruel parents.

b. "My parents," I hear other children say, "neglected their duties in my regard; they neglected my education, etc." If this heavy charge be well-founded, you have urgent reason to show your love by praying for them. How frequently do we read of astounding conversions in consequence of the ardent prayers of children, especially during a mission!

II. Children should love their parents sincerely and actively.

1. It is self-evident that a true filial love must spring from the depth of the heart. Else it would be sheer hypocrisy. Absalom, who externally showed reverence for his father, had not one spark of love to him in his heart. A child that loves its parents sincerely, rejoices when it is well with them; and is sad when they are grief-stricken. Young Tobias gives you, ye children, a beautiful example of this tender love. He could not be induced by Raguel his father-in law to stay a few days longer after the wedding. "I know," said he, "that my father and mother now count the days; and their spirit is grievously af-

flicted within them." Tobias x, 9. And to Raphael he said: "Thou knowest that my father numbereth the days; and if I stay one day more, his soul will be afflicted." ix, 4. Would to God I could say of all children that they love their parents with the same tenderness! Alas! Many keep up a show of love until their parents have bequeathed to them their property. But afterwards their parents live too long. There are others who commence lawsuits against their own parents. Oh! that they would remember the fate of Absalom!

a. A sincere love demands that you should rejoice the heart of your parents by leading a virtuous life, and by praying for them. Good children are their greatest treasure and consolation. But wayward children are the heaviest cross laid upon the shoulders of parents. How great was the misery brought upon Jacob by his sons, and upon David by Absalom. "My son Absalom," said the king in his deep grief, "Absalom my son: who would grant me that I might die for thee, Absalom my son, my son Absalom!" II Kings xviii, 23.

b. And if St. Paul writes: "I desire, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men" (I Tim. ii, 1), how much more right have then our parents to expect our prayers?

2. What does active love demand of you? That you aid your parents in their bodily and spiritual wants.

a. In their bodily wants. To be convinced of this duty, remember what your parents have done for you, especially in the years of your childhood. If you be pious children, you will follow the example of Joseph of Egypt, who sent this message to his father: "Thus saith thy son Joseph: God hath made me lord of the whole land of Egypt: come down to me, linger not. And thou shalt be near me, and I will feed thee." Gen. xlv. "If on the day of judgment God will be so severe on those who have performed no works of charity, how much more severely will he act on those who were uncharitable to their own parents!" St. Bernard.

b. Your fault will be the greater, if you neglect to aid your parents in their *spiritual wants*. If you love your parents

sincerely, you will take care of their salvation, as far as it is in your power. Therefore you will pray for them, and in time of dangerous illness will send for the priest of the Church. After their death, let it not be said of you: "Out of sight, out of mind." Genuine charity reaches beyond the grave. St. Louis king of France, when in Palestine, received intelligence of his mother's death, whereupon he retired immediately to pray for the repose of her soul. Then he had many holy masses said for her, and sent many jewels to the various churches in his dominions, that prayers might be offered for the soul of his dearly beloved mother. Such was the solicitude of this holy son for the peace and welfare of his holy mother.

Peroration: If you follow the example of this Saint, by loving your parents from your hearts, and actively, it will be well with you here and hereafter.

J. E. Zollner.

VI.

JOYS AND SUFFERINGS.

The Holy Family, although most beloved by God, had its joys mingled with bitterness, for our instruction.

JOYS:	SUFFERINGS:
1. Joseph is espoused to Mary, the purest and holiest of virgins.	He sees her in the condition of mother, without having been informed of the stupendous mystery.
2. Joseph, after the angel's appearing, took unto him Mary his wife.	At the approach of the birth of the Divine Child he must start on a wearisome journey to Bethlehem.
3. The time of grace is fulfilled.	The favored pair find no shelter in the city of their forefathers.
4. The joyful birth of the Son of God.	The stable. The manger.

5. The jubilant choirs of holy angels, the adoration of the shepherds.	The cold indifference of the world at large.
6. The coming of the Wise Men. Gold and frankincense.	Myrrh. Herod's machinations.
7. Presentation in the temple. Simeon's hymn; Anna's joy.	Simeon's prophecy, that the Child is set for a sign which shall be contradicted, and the Mother's own soul a sword shall pierce.
8. They hoped to lead a quiet life at Nazareth.	The Angel commands them to flee into Egypt.
9. The Angel commands them to return, Herod being dead.	The cruel Archelaus.
10. They are directed toward Nazareth, where there was no danger.	Jesus contemned as a Nazarene.
11. They celebrate the pasch in Jerusalem with a joyful heart.	Jesus is lost.

This continual intermingling of joy and bitterness can be traced throughout the public life of Jesus also. In this way God leads all his favored children, that from the troublous tossing of this sea of life they may be transported into everlasting life, where there is no change, but serene gladness for ever.

Stapf.

The Epiphany.

VI.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST AND THE CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS.

"We are come to adore him." Mt. ii, 2. The same Jesus whose Manifestation we celebrate on this great festival day, dwells in our tabernacles. The Gospel mentions three classes of men, whose conduct toward the new-born Saviour it describes. The inhabitants of Jerusalem treated the Divine Child with the utmost indifference. Herod professed a desire to adore him; it was the profession of a hypocrite whose real object was the Child's destruction. The Wise Men of the East searched after the Child, adored him with profound reverence, and offered him precious gifts. The conduct of these three classes of men is a figure and mirror of the conduct of three classes of Christians toward Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It is to this subject that I invite your attention.

I. THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM.

1. They heard that the Saviour was born in Jerusalem, they read the prophecy to the Wise Men, but would not themselves go to adore the King of the Jews, the Expected of the nations.

2. Many Christians, although believing that the same Jesus is in our churches, have no desire to receive him frequently in the Holy Eucharist, nor even to visit him regularly in our Bethlehem, i. e., the house of bread, by attending Holy Mass, or hearing the word of God.

a. Some are slothful—are not willing to rise early, to walk a few miles. If they were invited to a wedding, to a ball, etc., the distance would not be too great, nor the weather too inclement.

b. Others are deterred by false human respect. They will not suffer their courage to be disputed by any one; and yet,

through lack of courage, they stay away from church and from Holy Communion.

c. Others plead lack of time. Yet they find ample time for vain and unprofitable, nay even sinful, occupations. Do you belong to any one of these classes of men? Oh! if you have compassion on the divine Child, whom the Bethlemites refused to receive, show this compassion by opening your heart to the same Jesus who pleads for an entrance therein. He is anxious to impart to you peace of heart and strength in times of temptation.

II. KING HEROD.

1. He pretended to be anxious to adore the Child, when in reality he was his bitterest enemy, and sought his life.

2. Those who receive Holy Communion sacrilegiously resemble impious Herod. They also pretend to adore the Saviour; they lift up their hands, strike their breasts; they profess a fervent desire to be intimately united with Jesus; they go to him and kiss him. But in their hearts is mortal sin, which Jesus abhors more than we abhor a corrupting corpse; in their hearts Satan reigns, the enemy of Jesus. And into such a heart they force the Divine Child to come. But, like Herod, they will receive, in this world, an agitated conscience, and in the next world, everlasting punishment in the society of Herod.

Should there be, unfortunately, any one amongst you, who has a sacrilegious Communion upon his soul, let him go to see the sweet Child in the crib, and promise him to atone for his outrage, especially by a worthy confession.

III. THE WISE MEN.

1. They were not deterred by the wearisome journey, nor by the mockery of others, from adoring Jesus. And when they had found him, they did not content themselves with adoring the Child, but they offered him costly gifts.

2. In like manner, good Christians follow the star of grace to adore, embrace, and receive into their hearts, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. They are not deterred by those inconve-

niences commonly connected with the reception of the holy sacraments, nor by the foolish or malicious talk of men.

And like the Magi from the East, they will make a worthy preparation, offering up to Jesus the frankincense of prayer, the gold of charity, and the myrrh of mortification.

Let us approach the crib of our Saviour, and in the presence of the Divine Child, examine our conscience, to which of these classes we belong.

J. Schmitt.

VI.

CHARITY OF JESUS IN HIS MANIFESTATION.

Verily, "the glory of the Lord is risen" like the sun in his splendor. His rays shine in the far East, and in Jerusalem. So great was the charity of Jesus! Jews and Gentiles were called upon to partake of its blessings. Let us meditate on this exceeding love manifested by the Son of God in his manifestation.

I. THE LOVE OF JESUS FOR THE GENTILES.

1. *He inclines them to seek him.*

a. He sends them a star, an object of their favorite studies, thus leading them through their natural inclination to Himself, to truth and blessedness.

b. He sends them *his* star. "We have seen *his* star in the East." They were called upon to seek him for his own sake, as the Lord of the world, as King of kings, as God in the flesh, from a pure intention, not out of curiosity.

c. He gives them grace and strength to overcome the many obstacles in their way.

2. *He assists them to find him.*

a. In Jerusalem they inquire after the place of his birth, learn the divine mystery from Holy Scripture, and become themselves spiritual children of Abraham.

b. Seeing the star again, "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." They follow its guidance, and find the Saviour,

over whose birth-place it stood. Thus the Lord is found at last by every soul, after faithful searching.

b. They find the Child with Mary his mother. They behold with their eyes Him whom the prophets had foretold, and recognize him as God, as king, and as man; which their gifts signify.

3. *He blesses them at their departure.*

a. He warns them not to return to Herod, his enemy and theirs. The same Lord cautions us as urgently against sin —the Herod who seeks our perdition.

b. He warns them *in their sleep*, thus treating them in the same manner as he did his foster-father, as Solomon (III Kings iii, 5), Nathan (II Kings vii, 4), and Paul (Act. xvi, 8; xxiii, 11).

c. He sends them forth as his apostles to their native country, to lead their countrymen to Christ, to the kingdom of heaven.

II. THE LOVE OF JESUS TOWARD THE JEWS.

1. *He arouses them from their dangerous slumber.*

a. They took no heed of the prophecies their own prophets had uttered regarding the place and the time of his birth, which were either fulfilled (Gen. xlix, 10), or were soon to be fulfilled (Dan. ix, 24 ff.). They all slumbered and slept, like the virgins in the parable. Mt. xxv, 5.

b. On a sudden there was a cry made: Behold, the bridegroom cometh, the Messias is born! The Jews were aroused from their slumber by a general *consternation.* "Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;" by a wholesome *confusion*, occasioned by foreigners inquiring after him who was born king of the Jews; and by a great *embarrassment*, as they were not able to give forthwith an answer to the question.

2. *He affords them the means of finding him*, viz.:

a. The prophecies of Holy Scripture. Although they were negligent in meditating on the word of God, Jesus inclines them once more to search it.

b. The example of these foreigners. By following them, they would have found their Saviour.

c. The star which appeared again when the Wise Men left Jerusalem.

3. *He endeavors to provoke them to emulation.*

a. The Wise Men, although Gentiles, seek the king of the Jews. Uncircumcised strangers surpass the chosen people in longing for the Messias.

b. They did not return, although they had been requested by Herod to do so. Was not this another motive to go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord had prepared for them? Following the example of his divine Master, St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, endeavored to "provoke to emulation those who are my flesh." Rom. xi, 14.

Peroration: Thus the charity of Jesus is made known to Gentiles and Jews in his Epiphany. We being the offspring of the former, have urgent reason to thank God from our heart, especially on this day, for having called us to the true faith, and to renew our resolutions to live up to our vocation.

Menne.

First Sunday After Epiphany.

V.

CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS.

"And he was subject to them." God, whom the angels adore, is subject to Joseph and Mary. "The Virgin," says St. Vincent Ferrer, "takes the vessel early in the morning to fetch water. Joseph approaches her to relieve her of her task; the Child Jesus comes speedily, and taking the vessel, says, "I will go." O Lord! why is it that thou performest this menial office? Why not you, Mary and Joseph? They answer: "We are more than willing, but Jesus will do it himself." Ye holy angels, why not you? They reply: "We are more than willing, but Jesus will do it himself." Why then wilt thou do it thyself, O Lord? "That young Christians," he says, "when they once hear of these services I have rendered to my parents, may be also willing to assist their parents, and to obey them cheerfully in all things." Let me then explain to you, ye children, why, and how, you should obey your parents.

PART I.

WHY CHILDREN SHOULD OBEY THEIR PARENTS.

It is rather humiliating to a minister of the Gospel to have to speak of a duty which is engraved in every one's heart. Yet it is unfortunately necessary, especially for the present generation. I tell you that you are under the strictest obligation to do the will of your parents, both for the sake of God and for your own sakes.

1. *There is hardly a duty* that God has enjoined on his children more frequently, and more forcibly, than the duty of obedience to their parents. If God, amidst the awful accompaniments of thunders and lightnings, commanded you to honor your father and your mother, you are undoubtedly commanded to obey them. Obedience is, indeed, the test of the fourth com-

mandment. Besides Holy Scripture requires explicitly that children should obey their parents. "My son, keep the commandments of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Bind them in thy heart continually, and put them about thy neck. When thou walkest, let them go with thee; when thou sleepest let them keep thee; and when thou awakest, talk with them. Because the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Prov. vi, 20-23. In the Old Testament obedience to parents is enjoined under penalty of death. "If a man have a stubborn and unruly son, who will not hear the commandments of his father or mother, and being corrected, slighteth obedience: they shall take him, and bring him to the ancients of the city, and to the gate of judgment, and shall say to them: This our son is rebellious and stubborn; he slighteth hearing our admonitions; he giveth himself to revelling, and to debauchery, and banquetings. The people of the city shall stone him, and he shall die, that you may take away the evil out of the midst of you, and all Israel hearing it may be afraid." Deut. xxi, 18-21. If God does not punish the same crime of Christians, in the same manner, although it is in itself more hideous, he has reserved the due punishment for the next world.

Convinced of the importance of the fourth commandment, the Apostle admonishes all children: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." Eph. vi, 1. And again: "Children obey your parents in all things: for this is pleasing to the Lord." Col. iii, 20. Jesus enjoins on children the same duty by an example of thirty years. You should then never say, I am no longer a child, I know myself what I have to do: Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of the Father from all eternity, was obedient for thirty years.

2. *Your own welfare, children, depends on your obedience to your parents.*

a. Your parents know better than you what promotes your happiness. Experience testifies that obedient children live in prosperity, whilst disobedient children lead a wretched life.

Could it be otherwise, since God himself, by words and examples, assures us that happiness of life is dependent on obedience to parents? "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother, that grace may be added to thy head, and a chain of gold to thy neck." Prov. i, 8; Cf. Ecclus. iii, 6-7; St. Paul writes: "Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon earth." Eph. vi, 2. Holy Scripture confirms these divine promises in many examples. (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.) "Jesus humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him." Philip. ii, 9-11. Whereas in children who have shaken off the yoke of obedience, the words of the Lord are generally verified, even here below: "Of what an evil fame is he that forsaketh his father? and he is cursed of God that angereth his mother." Ecclus. iii, 18. (Cain, Ophni, and Phinees.)

PART II.

HOW CHILDREN SHOULD OBEY THEIR PARENTS.

1. *You must obey cheerfully and speedily.* If your parents have to speak to you twice and three times, before you fulfill their command, such reluctance to obey does not deserve the name of obedience. Samuel arose three times in the middle of the night, when he thought he heard the voice of his master. How joyous was the obedience of the perfect child, Jesus! Say then, all ye children, cheerfully and with a firm resolution, in the words of Tobias: "I will do all things, father, which thou hast commanded me." Tobias v, 1.

2. *Obey conscientiously.* Do what you have been bid to do with constant diligence. God the Omnipresent, in whose stead your parents issue their commands, observes you. Consider yourselves then as servants of God. Those children who are obedient only under the eyes of their parents, are like those sluggish animals that pull only when they have to fear the whip. Obey "in the simplicity of your heart, as Christ: not serving to

the eye, as it were pleasing men, but, as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with a good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." Eph. vi, 5-8.

3. *Obey in all things*, be it ever so arduous. It is not easy to bring a family honestly through life. Every member must work. Your salvation requires early self-denial. Call to your mind the obedience of Isaac, when his father was to sacrifice him. Jesus was obedient unto death.

Peroration: Let me in conclusion remind you, dear children, of the matters in which you should exercise more than ordinary care to obey your parents. In the first place, in all affairs of the household, your father being the master of his house. In the second place, in all parental demands concerning your morals. In the third place, fulfill the wishes of your parents uttered on their death-bed. Only, should your parents be so blind as to command you sinful deeds, or to attempt to keep you away from divine service or the frequent reception of the holy sacraments, or to force you to embrace a state of life for which you have no vocation, in all such cases you have no right, much less a duty, to yield to their wishes. But whenever your parents command you what is in accordance with God's will, obey them cheerfully and conscientiously, and your reward will be happiness here and hereafter.

J. E. Zollner.

VI.

LOSS OF INNOCENCE.

"After they had fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not." Lk. ii, 43. Joseph and Mary lose the divine Child. Who could fathom their grief! We lose the divine Child when we lose our innocence. How slight in comparison with the loss is the grief we experience! This being the greatest loss that man can suffer, let us endeavor to investigate its causes, and to ponder on its greatness.

PART I.

By baptism man is washed, sanctified, and justified. I Cor. vi, 11. He comes forth from the baptismal font in the garment of innocence. All heaven looks with delight down upon him. This innocence is frequently lost

1. *Partly through our own fault.*

Innocence is a treasure which we have in earthen vessels. II Cor. iv, 7. One trespass, one mortal sin, and the vessel is broken, the treasure lost. We ourselves are the cause:

a. We are not zealous in prayer. For the preservation of innocence divine grace is needed. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Rom. ix, 16. We cannot obtain grace unless by fervent prayer. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask him?" Lk. xi, 13. When a man is lukewarm in prayer, God no longer witholds him from temptation.

b. We are not watchful. We should take earnest heed that our numerous enemies may not rob us of our most precious treasure. "He that keepeth his soul keepeth his way." Prov. xvi, 17. Therefore, if you do not watch and guard your senses, if you sleep in the midst of the allurements of the world and of hell, you will soon lose the wreath of innocence.

You have lost your innocence. What is the cause of this great calamity? You have forsaken God and prayer; you have run after worldly amusements—dances, clandestine meetings, etc. You yourself are the cause of your misery. "Destruction is thy own, O Israel." Osee. xiii, 9.

2. *Partly through the fault of others.*

a. Many give occasion of sin: Parents, who sin in the presence of their children, or permit sinful meetings and parties, and all who speak impure words, etc.

b. Many cause *intentionally* the spiritual ruin of others. These are the seducers who plot the destruction of innocence. "An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips; but in his heart he lieth in wait, to throw thee into a pit." Ecclus. xii, 15.

PART II.

Do you know what the loss of innocence involves?

1. *It is an infinite injury.*

a. Peace of mind is lost.

The sting of conscience is felt. "Weeping she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks." Lam. i, 2.

b. The divine friendship is lost.

God loves you with infinite love. Innocence lost, this divine love is lost also. Thenceforth the words apply: "The Highest hateth sinners." Ecclus. xii, 7. Innocence has the promise of life everlasting. This promise is forfeited by sin. "I know you not. * * * Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." Lk. xiii, 27.

2. *It is an irretrievable injury.*

True, the sinner recovers, by penance, the friendship of God, and the hope of life everlasting. The wound inflicted on his conscience is healed also, and peace restored to the afflicted heart. Conc. Trid. Sess. xiv, de poenit. cap. 2. Nevertheless, innocence is lost forever. It cannot be recovered. If you shed burning tears, if you should shed your blood by the death of martyrdom, the withered lily will never bloom again, the lost jewel will never be restored.

Peroration: The loss is infinite, the damage irreparable. If your innocence be lost, weep bitterly. You have lost more than a kingdom, more than the value of the whole world. "Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes? and I will weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Jerem. ix, 1. Do penance and serve God henceforth faithfully. Have you still your baptismal innocence? Guard this pearl in its celestial whiteness. Give rather your life, and the last drop of your blood, than cast away your innocence. "Watch ye and pray." But woe to you who lay snares for innocent souls. Remember the curse pronounced against you. It is better that a mill-stone were hanged about your neck, and that you were drowned in the depth of the sea. Mt. xviii, 6. God will put on the armour of his wrath against the seducer, on the day of reckoning.

Joseph Schuen.

Second Sunday After Epiphany.

V.

TWO GROOM'S-MEN.

"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there." John ii, 1. The Gospel speaks of a marriage which took place in a small village in the land of the Jews. Most of you have either celebrated your marriage, or hope to do so. Permit me to draw your attention to two persons who take a prominent part at such solemnities, I mean the groom's-men. If you could open the eyes of your soul, you would, besides those groom's-men whom you see with your corporal eyes, see yet another groom's-man, sometimes an angel of heaven, sometimes an infernal demon.

I.

The angel of heaven accompanies on their wedding day those who enter the married state

1. *With a pure intention.*

The end of matrimony is

a. A natural one.

God wills that mankind be propagated to the consummation of time, so that his name be praised on earth for evermore. For this end he has instituted matrimony. He said to the first couple: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth." Gen. i, 28. Therefore the Israelites regarded it as a grace from above to see their matrimony blessed with children. Gen. iv, 1; xxx, 22-24; I Kings ii, 1-10. Pious Christians still regard their children as a divine blessing.

b. A moral one.

Married people should be a help and consolation *to each other.* In this vale of tears they ought to assist each other in carrying the cross, and in traveling the path to heaven. "It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself." Gen. ii, 18. "Bear ye one another's burdens." Gal.

vi, 2. They ought to *lead their children* along the road to heaven. Almost all depends on education. "There is no sublimer art than that of education. Painters and sculptors produce but inanimate images. But he who educates children well produces a living masterpiece, in which the eyes of God and men delight." St. Chrysostom. Whoever is instigated by this motive to enter married life, his intention is pure, and God's angel leads him on his wedding day to the altar.

2. *With a pure heart.*

Matrimony, being a sacrament of the New Covenant, is not lawfully received except in the state of grace. Happy are the betrothed couple, when their matrimony is preceded

a. By a virtuous life.

Purity of morals is the best preparation for matrimony. "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I have kept my soul clean from all lust," said Sara to the Lord. Tobias iii, 16. The angel of him who spends the days of his youth in innocence, will lead him to church on his wedding day.

b. By a good confession.

The Church expects of those who are about to be married, that they confess their sins, although they should be in the state of grace. "Confession renders the sinner pure, and the just one purer still." St. Bernard. Therefore, if they confess sincerely and with a contrite heart their sins, their hearts are cleansed, and the angel of God precedes them on their wedding day, and invokes the heavenly blessing upon them, when the priest joins them together by the bonds of matrimony.

II.

The devil accompanies those who enter into married life

1. *With a wicked intention.*

The archangel Raphael said to Tobias: "Hear me, and I will show thee who they are, over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power." Tobias vi, 16, 17.

The devil has in consequence power over those who shut out God from their mind, and receive matrimony

a. Only for the sake of money.

"Gold and silver hath destroyed many." Ecclus. viii, 3.

b. Only for the sake of lust. "As the horse and mule, which have not understanding." Tobias vi, 17. "For we are the children of saints; and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God." viii, 5. Alas! the married state is often considered as a state of licentiousness, as a privileged spot of prodigality.

Whoever with such unholy intention approaches the altar, over him the devil hath power. A wicked spirit precedes him.

2. *With an impure heart.*

Such is the case, when matrimony is preceded

a. By a loose life.

Many have strong reason to be ashamed of their youth. Sins are multiplied by the too great intimacy of youth. Many a couple may sigh: "My iniquities are gone over my head; and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me." Ps. xxxvii, 5. And the day, which should be a day of honor, approaches, and the hour comes for the reception of the holy sacrament, and with a heart contaminated with vices, they proceed to the altar, of course accompanied by the unclean spirit.

b. By a sacrilege.

If those who are in sin receive the holy sacraments either without confessing sincerely their sins, or without repenting of them, they are on their wedding day guilty of a three-fold sacrilege, and hell sends forth one of its spirits to be groom's-man.

Peroration: Ye young people, whom do you wish to be your groom's-man, the angel or the devil? If you desire the angel, keep your heart incontaminated. Married people, who was your groom's-man? If it was the devil deliver yourselves from him by a sincere confession, if you have not done so yet.

Joseph Schuen.

VI.

CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF GOD AND THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

"They have no wine." John ii, 3. The Gospel exhorts us by the example of the Blessed Virgin, never to lose our confidence in God, and by her efficacious prayer on this occasion, to put a great confidence in her intercession.

PART I.

LIKE MARY PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE TO GOD.

I. Her prayer is accompanied with exceeding confidence, as is manifest:

1. *From the object of her prayer.*

a. She requests the performance of a miracle—the manifestation of her Son as Creator, sovereign Lord, and God. Verily, a great confidence!

b. Apparently without a sufficient motive. It is not the reconciliation of a sinner, nor the consolation of a poor widow, etc., she prays for. And yet her confidence is unlimited. If our prayers are directed toward greater things, still more may our confidence that we shall have them granted, be well founded.

2. *From the manner of making her request.*

a. She introduces no excuse.

b. She does not assign the reason of her prayer, as for instance the embarrassment of the married couple, or their worthiness; but she uses only a few words. "When you are praying, speak not much." Mt. vi, 7.

3. *From her continuing to have hope after an apparent refusal.*

a. The answer is discouraging. "Woman what is that to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come," as if to say: From the time of my baptism to my death on the Cross I renounce everything, even the tender ties of family, that I may do the will of the Father.

b. Nevertheless her hope remains unshaken. "His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye."

II. *Let us imitate our Blessed Mother in her trust in God.*

1. *It is agreeable to her.*

a. For, thus we resemble her. More than by invoking her, more than by worshiping her altars and statues, do we rejoice her heart by copying her virtues in our lives.

b. We glorify Jesus Christ, her Son, by confessing his charity and divine omnipotence.

2. *It is necessary to us.*

a. If we pray with confidence, our petitions will be granted. Vide Mt. xvii, 19. "I say to you, all things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you." Mk. xi, 24. "Verily, we receive everything. For we obtain as much as we hope for." St. Bernard. The Lord always received confidence as the necessary condition of being heard. Cf. Lk. vii, 50; Mt. viii, 13, 15, 28.

b. Without confidence, our prayer is in vain. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, that is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James i, 7. Moses striking the rock for water. Lack of confidence is, in most cases, the explanation of our petitions not being granted.

PART II.

PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE IN MARY'S INTERCESSION.

Motives of this confidence:

1. *Her great love.*

a. It was manifested in Cana. Her heart is moved with tender compassion at an insignificant inconvenience. She intercedes at once, and fearing that disobedience might prevent the granting of her petition, she exhorts the waiters to be obedient. She does all this, without being asked. Verily, the heart of Our Lady is the heart of the tenderest of mothers.

b. Her kindness is perfected in heaven, as all her virtues were perfected on her day of Assumption. "God has de-

creed, that we should receive from him everything through Mary." St. Bernard. The benefits and blessings bestowed upon Christians through the Blessed Virgin are innumerable.

c. This love is natural with her, because she is our mother. Being the Mother of Christ, she is in consequence our mother also, since we are children of God, brethren and sisters of the Lord, "that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren." Rom. viii, 29. Her Son, hanging on the Cross, gave Mary solemnly to us as our mother. Hence she has every claim to our confidence in her.

2. *The power of her intercession.*

a. It is manifested in Cana. She asks for a miracle, when the hour is not come; and Jesus dispenses with the law of nature. Thus her power is guaranteed to us.

b. It is based on her relation to God. Solomon said to his mother: "My mother, ask: for I must not turn away thy face." III Kings ii, 20. He who said to himself, "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Mt. xii, 42), will not be surpassed by Solomon in kindness to his mother. Who can imagine that the Father should turn a deaf ear to the petitions of his dearest daughter, and the Holy Ghost, of his chosen bride?

Peroration: We should, however, never overlook the truth, that Mary hears but the prayer of the innocent or penitent. Therefore let us comply with her injunction: "Whatever he shall say to you, do ye." Then it will come to pass, that through her intercession "Jesus will change the water of sadness into wine of heavenly joy, and death into life everlasting." St. Bernard.

Storchenau.

Third Sunday After Epiphany.

V.

WEEPING IN HELL.

Man, being contaminated with the leprosy of sin, ought to lament and weep at the dreadful condition into which he has thrown himself. If he does not shed tears of penance here on earth, he will be obliged, ere long, to shed tears of despair in hell. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Mt. v, 5. But woe to those who here below spend their days in sinful lusts and joys: their eyes will one day be filled with bitter tears. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. viii, 12. Let us in spirit descend into the depth of hell, and see and hear the weeping of those who in their lifetime would not shed tears for their sins, not even tears of the heart. O my brethren, what tears!

I. WEEPING WITHOUT PROFIT.

Weeping is tolerable so long as you have a hope of seeing brighter days. Only weeping which profits not, and ends not, is an unendurable torment. Esau, when deprived of his birthright, "roared out with a great cry." Gen. xxvii, 34. How piercing will be the cry of the condemned, when entering the gloomy dungeon, they see their cruel tormentors awaiting them, and the excruciating fire; and when they begin to experience the absence of all that is good, and the presence of all that is evil!

1. But their weeping will be of no avail to them. By their tears they can (*a*) neither wipe away the stain of their sins; nor (*b*) quench one spark of the burning fire; nor (*c*) obtain from the Almighty one sign of relenting.

2. Their weeping and gnashing of teeth are unavoidable. They cannot but weep. Tears are demanded (*a*) by the horrid prison wherein they languish; (*b*) by the flame of fire penetrating to the very marrow of their bones; (*c*) by paradise being

shut against them; (*d*) by God himself being lost to them for ever.

3. Their weeping will appear to them as a *just and well deserved punishment* (*a*) on account of their having neglected the opportunities offered to them of doing good; (*b*) on account of the graces they made no use of; (*c*) on account of their sins, which rendered vain all the blood of the Saviour shed for them on the Cross. O ye blind children of this world! you laugh in your sinful amusements. "Woe to you that laugh now: for you shall mourn and weep." Lk. vi, 25. "If we will not weep here below, we must weep in the next world; and there it will be without profit, whilst here it is profitable." St. Chrysostom.

II. WEEPING WITHOUT CONSOLATION.

Although this earth is with reason called the vale of tears, yet to weep on earth is never without consolation. In hell it is quite different.

1. The condemned find *no outward consolation.* Wherever they may turn their eyes, they find new cause for weeping.

a. When they lift their eyes toward heaven—alas! it is closed against them for ever. The Almighty hurls his thunderbolts upon them.

b. When they look back upon the earth—alas! in their lives they had attached their hearts to it, and now they curse the earth as the principal cause of their everlasting misery.

c. When they gaze around the place of their torments—what consolation can they find at the sight of the fire and brimstone, of the devils, etc.

d. When they gaze upon their fellow-sufferers—they are far from wiping away one tear from their faces. Far from consoling, they curse them. The condemned curse one another: the unchaste man curses the associate of his sins, the daughter, her mother; the father, his children, etc. All alike may truly say: "Evils without numbers have surrounded me." Ps. xxxix, 13.

2. They find no inward consolation. The faculties of their soul procure for them no consolation; on the contrary they increase their torments, viz.:—

a. The memory. To the lustful man the remembrance of his impure pleasures is painful; to the wrathful, the remembrance of having taken revenge; to the unjust, the remembrance of the frauds by which he has defrauded others. They recognize in all these things the causes of their ruin. "Then, every sweetness of those who now rejoice, will be turned into weeping and sighing." St. Jerome.

b. The understanding. The condemned acknowledge their perdition to have been through their own fault, although it was in their power easily to have saved themselves if they would have made use of the graces offered them. An excruciating knowledge indeed!

c. The will. It is agitated by hatred, envy, fury, despair. And if some inclination for good should be left, it can only add to the pain. For should the condemned dare to send a petition heavenward, it is refused. "Only a drop of water!" they cry with Dives. Only one ray of Thy light! Only one glance of Thine eyes, to comfort us! But God will turn a deaf ear to their entreaties. Would that every one of us could be justified in saying: "My eyes have sent forth springs of water, because they have not kept my law." Ps. cxviii, 136.

III. WEEPING WITHOUT END.

What a transport of joy would it afford to the condemned, should God announce to them: "Thou must yet shed as many tears as there are drops of water in all the rivers and oceans; and then the hour of thy redemption will strike." But no!

1. The weeping in hell will never end. Their torments cannot kill the condemned, for they are immortal.

2. It can never diminish, as the cause of it is irremovable.

a. It is the loss of God. During every moment of eternity the words will sound in their ears: "Thou shalt see My face no more." And with infinitely more reason than David they will

say: "My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?" Ps. xli, 1.

b. The cause of this loss—their sins. Like to horrible monsters, they will swarm continually around him, crying out to him: "Here we are, to torment thee! Thou wert not willing to weep because of us in earthly life, now thou must weep because of us during all eternity." "Thy crimes will eternally cruciate thee, because eternally thou wilt remember them." St. Bernard.

Peroration: "After so little pleasure, what sadness!" St. Bernard. Are you then able still to love the joys of the world? Can you still laugh, when you remember the great number of your sins? "Weep here a little, that you may not be forced to weep perpetually above the clouds." St. Ephrem.

Bordoni.

VI.

MOTIVES OF HUMILITY.

The profound humility of the Centurion deserves, indeed, our admiration. The Divine Saviour is willing to go into his house, that He may heal his servant. But he, a Gentile, having soldiers under him, declines the honor, saying: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Mt. viii, 8. Let us follow this Centurion in his humility; for this virtue brings forth many desirable fruits, and is enjoined upon us both by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, and is peremptorily demanded by our own misery.

I. THE FRUITS OF HUMILITY.

1. *Humility keeps us from many sins.* The truly humble Christian resembles the little ones, whom Jesus set before us as our models. He does not speak falsehood, is not proud, has no inordinate desire for earthly things, envies no one, is not given to avarice, nor to wrath. "No vice can prevail, when pride, the

head of all sins, is beheaded by the virtue of humility." St. Bonaventure.

2. *Humility preserves the other virtues.* "Whoever gathers virtues without humility, scatters, as it were, dust to the wind." St. Gregory. "Esteem nothing higher than humility, regard nothing as more amiable. For by this virtue the other virtues are preserved and protected." St. Jerome.

3. *Humility attracts divine grace.* "As the magnet attracts iron, so humility attracts divine grace." St. Bernardin. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." James iv, 6.

4. *Humility inflames our heart with divine charity.* God, unlike the mighty of the world, who deem only persons of wealth and exalted position worthy of their affection, looks down with special complacency upon the humble. "Who is as the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth?" Ps. cxii, 5, 6.

5. *Humility exalts us to the height of heaven.* "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble." Lk. i, 52. "Everyone that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." Lk. xviii, 14. "By humiliation ascend the mountain; for this is the way, and there is no other one besides this. Whosoever attempts to ascend by any other way, will fall down, before he reaches the summit." St. Augustine. "Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that he may exalt you in the time of visitation." I Pet. v, 6.

II. THE TEACHING AND EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Jesus has enjoined on us the duty of humility

1. *In words.* "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." Mt. xi, 29. He repeatedly insisted on this virtue, and promised eternal reward to those who are little in their own eyes.

2. *By his example.* "We perceive that the whole life of Jesus instructs us in humility." St. Basil. This virtue shines the brightest

a. In his birth. He whom the heavens cannot hold, has become a little child. The Creator of heaven and earth lies in the manger. "What is more execrable and deserving of punishment than man puffing himself up, although he sees that the Son of God, the Most High in the kingdom of heaven, has become the least in the kingdom of men?" St. Bernard.

b. In his circumcision. He never sinned, nor could he ever sin; he hates nothing more than sin. Yet he wills to be regarded as a sinner in his circumcision. "In his Incarnation he became a little less than the angels, but in his circumcision, far less, being branded with the brand of a sinner." St. Bernard.

c. In washing the feet of his disciples. He whose command the angels, the wind, and waters obey, washes the feet of his disciples; Judas, who is to betray him, not excepted. O infinite depth of humility!

d. In his death on the Cross. There was no possibility for him to humble himself more, than by an ignominious death on the Cross. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Philp. ii, 8.

"Walk in the humility of Jesus Christ, that you may reach eternity." St. Augustine.

III. OUR OWN MISERY.

How many are the motives which exhort us to humble ourselves! We find

1. *Motives in the outer world.*

a. If you look at the earth, you behold your *grave.* "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken." Gen. iii, 19.

b. If you look at what is beneath the earth, there you find *hell.* Perhaps you often deserved hell, or your soul is, perhaps, at present, in a state which deserves hell.

c. If you look up to *heaven* there is your God, who loves you and has ever loved you, but whom you have so often offended; where the angels and Saints dwell, to whom you are so unlike. Do you expect one day to join their society? "The

gate of heaven is low. If you will enter with head unhurt, you must incline it." St. Augustine.

d. If you consider the *society* you keep, the evil spirits swarming around you, you are reminded of their great power, hatred and envy. You owe to divine mercy that you have not become their prey as yet.

2. *Motives within ourselves.*

a. Concerning our *body.* Although it is a master-piece of the visible creation, yet we have sufficient reason to humble ourselves, when reflecting on its origin ("I have said to rottenness, thou art my father"), on its present condition (a vessel of filth. "Thy humiliation shall be in the midst of thee." Mich. vi, 14), and on its future condition. Our body will be the food of worms, dust and ashes. "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." Gen. iii, 19.

b. Concerning our *soul.* True, our soul has been created according to the image and likeness of God, but contaminated with *original sin*, the guilt of which has been taken away; yet so that its evil consequences weigh still heavily upon us. "Behold, I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me." Ps. L, 7. Besides, our souls have been contaminated with actual sin; and our frailty and levity are so great, that we may fall at any time. Are we to persevere in the grace of God?

Peroration: Well, then, let us earnestly employ the above means in order to attain the virtue of humility. Besides, shun the company of the proud; for "he that toucheth pitch, shall be defiled with it; and he that hath fellowship with the proud shall put on pride." Ecclus. xiii, 1. Finally, bear patiently whatever may be offensive to your self-love; for "humiliation is the way to humility." St. Augustine.

Laselve.

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany.

V.

TRUST IN GOD.

Jesus reproaches his disciples, because they had so feeble a faith in his power and bounty. That we may not deserve the same reproof, we will ever trust in the name of the Lord, whence help will come to us, and, for the purpose of strengthening this trust, we investigate the reasons and qualities of our confidence in God.

I. MOTIVES WHEREFORE WE SHOULD TRUST IN GOD.

We cannot doubt that God is powerful to help us. He is also willing to help us, because

1. He is infinitely bountiful.

a. God is kind even to those who never petition him to help them, but, instead, often abuse his kindness. How much more is he willing to hasten to the succor of those who ask for his assistance!

b. By Holy Scripture God is represented as the Father who, when his prodigal son was yet a great way off, saw him, and was moved with compassion, and, running to him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him, etc. Lk. xv, 20. If a woman should forget her son, yet He will not forget him. Isai. xlix, 15.

c. He gave his beloved Son to die on the cross for us. Whatever we may ask of him, it is little in comparison with this great benefit. Who could then suppose that God will refuse to us what is less, after he has given what is the most precious to us? "He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?" Rom. viii, 32.

2. He has promised to come to our assistance.

a. Almost every page of the Old Testament exhorts us to put our confidence in the Lord; in a special manner the psalms of David, as Ps. xc.

b. In the New Testament God demands the same confidence. "Have the faith of God. Amen I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain: Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe, that whatsoever he shall say, shall be done, it shall be done for him. Therefore I say to you, all things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you." Mk. xi, 23. The lives of Saints are so many proofs of the truth of this promise, especially the wonderful life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgos.

c. God confirms his promise in the most solemn manner: "Amen, Amen I say to you." Tertullian makes the appropriate remark: "How happy we are that God makes us such promises; but how miserable we are if, in spite of them, we do not trust in God!"

3. He rewards our confidence in him.

a. Abraham, trusting in the divine promise, hoped for a son, notwithstanding his great age. Full of confidence he was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac, firmly hoping God would rather work a stupendous miracle than not fulfill the promises made to him. Cf. Heb. xi, 17-19.

b. David, armed with confidence in the Lord, slew Goliath. I Kings xvii, 17. He never lost this confidence, and was ever rewarded for it in his agitated life.

c. Job protested before his friends (viii, 15): "Although he should kill me, I will trust in him;" and his hope was not confounded.

d. The three young men in the furnace, Daniel in the lions' den, and Judith in the camp of the ferocious enemy, hoped in the Lord, and they were heard according to the desire of their heart.

II. IN WHAT MANNER SHOULD WE TRUST IN THE LORD?

1. *Entirely and unreservedly.*

a. In all needs of our soul and body. "And this is the confidence which we have in him, that whatsoever we shall ask, according to his will, he heareth us." I John v, 14. The four

thousand men in the desert, although longing only for the bread of the soul, found bread for their bodies also. Mk. viii.

b. In all conditions of life, be they ever so arduous. God is near to us in misfortune also, and frequently avails himself of adversities to make his Providence more manifest. Joseph was in prison, Esther in exile, before they were elevated to high dignity, and made the benefactors of their people.

2. At all times; not only when all human help has vanished. We are permitted to seek for human assistance, yet we must never forget that God sends it. Because Joseph expected his deliverance to come from the cupbearer, the time of his imprisonment, according to St. Chrysostom, was prolonged.

3. *Firmly and steadfastly.*

a. God abhors all distrust of him. The Gospel of the day affords an evidence of this. We find, also, a proof of it in Peter, who, walking upon the water, began to sink, because he was of little faith and doubted (Mt. xiv, 29-31), and in Moses, who, in punishment of a slight doubt, was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. Numb. xx, 12.

b. On the other hand, God rewards an unreserved and firm confidence in his bounty, as, for example, the centurion, Mt. viii, 10, and still more remarkably the woman of Chanaan. Mt. xv, 28.

Peroration: Let us then firmly trust in the Lord. "We can do all things in Him, without whom we can do nothing." St. Leo. Let us acknowledge "that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded." Ecclus. ii, 11. When the tempest is raging, let us take hold of the anchor of hope (Heb. vi, 19), and let us confidently say with the Psalmist: "Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in thee." Ps. xxxii, 22.

Houdry.

VI.

UTILITY OF TRIBULATIONS.

The anxious mother generally finds it hard to induce her child to take the bitter, but wholesome medicine. When God is to give his children the medicine of affliction, he finds the same reluctance. No sooner do we taste this medicine than we cry out to be delivered from the bitter draught. Yet in the light of Christian doctrine, afflictions and tribulations are:

I. THE GREATEST BLESSING TO THE SINNER.

1. *As preparation for conversion.* What is the cause of sin?

a. The predominance of sensuality over the spirit. The law of the flesh prevails over man's will. "I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members." Rom. vii, 23. But suffering is death to sensuality. Ergo.

b. The attachment of man to earthly things. The pleasures, honors, and goods of the world are sweet poison enticing the human heart. By tribulation we become convinced how worthless are all earthly things, and have, in consequence, reason to say with David: "We have rejoiced for the days in which thou hast humbled us; for the years in which we have seen evils." Ps. lxxxix, 15.

c. Man forgets God, and slights divine things. The history of Israel and daily experience teach, that man possessed of earthly goods has no desire for spiritual things; that he deprives himself of the conviction of his dependence, and is in consequence no longer obedient to God and God's commandments. But by affliction and tribulation man is, as it were, forced to take refuge in God, and to compare the joys and goods which pass not away with the perishable joys and goods of this world. Verily, an infinite gain! "The Lord chastising hath chastised me; but he hath not delivered me over to death." Ps. cxvii, 18.

2. *As a means to make conversion permanent.* The converted sinner frequently relapses into his old sins. The causes of this lamentable fact are:

a. Want of *earnestness.* Men living in prosperity are much inclined to levity. "The beloved grew fat and kicked; he grew fat and thick and gross: he forsook God who made him, and departed from God his Saviour." Deut. xxxii, 15. By tribulations the serious import of life is forced upon his attention.

b. Want of *watchfulness.* "While men were asleep, the enemy came, and oversowed cockle among the wheat." But by every affliction we are reminded of our being surrounded by numerous enemies, so that the warning of the Apostle comes back to us: "Be sober, and watch." I Pet. v, 8.

c. Virtue has not struck deep roots. The tree shaken by the tempest, strikes deeper roots. So does virtue in the midst of tribulations.

II. THE GREATEST BLESSING TO THE JUST MAN.

1. By tribulation we are protected against relapse:

a. By causing a wholesome distrust of earthly things the vanity of which is made palpable to us, as well as distrust of ourselves, since by storms it is made manifest how easily we are tossed to and fro.

b. By causing great confidence in God, who is our only help, and our only source of consolation. David, when on the royal throne, became unfaithful to God; Job, when visited by horrible sufferings, became the more attached to him. When the Lord has laid a cross upon our shoulders, we cling to the Cross of our Saviour, as experience teaches.

2. By tribulation we are led on to perfection.

a. Our heart is detached from self-love, sickly susceptibility, and from inordinate love of creatures.

b. Virtue is strengthened by the storm. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity." II Cor. xii, 9.

c. We resemble Jesus Christ, the absolute model of perfection. Our destiny is "to be made conformable to the image of his Son." Rom. viii, 29. He who desires to be his disciple, let him take his cross upon his shoulders and follow him. Hence all the Saints ascended the mount of Calvary. "All who will live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." II. Tim. iii, 12.

3. We partake of infinite reward. "Blessed are they that mourn, that suffer persecution." "I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii, 18. The greater the contest, the greater the triumph. The more our soul is tried in the furnace of affliction, the more intimate will be her union with God.

Peroration: Hail to those who suffer patiently! "Afflicted in few things, in many they shall be well rewarded, because God hath tried them, and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace he hath proved them; and as a victim of a holocaust, he hath received them; and in time there shall be respect had to them." Wisd. iii, 5. Let us then seek consolation in the words of our Saviour: "Those whom I love, I rebuke and chastise." Apoc. iii, 19.

Villardi.

Fifth Sunday After Epiphany.

V.

WHY GOD SUFFERS THE WICKED.

There were, already, in the time of the Old Testament, men who, instigated by a false zeal, desired, like the servants in the Gospel, to gather up all the cockle in the field of the Lord—to see all the wicked men at once taken out of the world. Hab. i, 11; Ps. xciii, 3. There are also now-a-days men who enquire in amazement: Why is it that God suffers the wicked upon the face of the earth? Why did he say: "Let both grow until the harvest?" Mt. xiii, 30. Let me then endeavor to defend Divine Providence against these gainsayers.

PART I.

WHY IS IT THAT GOD SUFFERS THE WICKED SO LONG ON EARTH?

I. They must contribute to the *increase of his glory.*

Infidels are instruments in his hands whom he uses in order to perform the wonders of his grace; heretics, to make manifest his truth in a brighter light; apostates, to prove the perpetuity of his Church: the Jews, to be living witnesses for Jesus Christ all over the world.

II. They must contribute toward manifesting *his perfections:*

1. *His bounty.* God does not treat sinful men as severely as he treated the fallen angels. He deals with them after the manner of the Church, who excludes no one from her communion before she has twice or more admonished him. "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, that whosoever found him should not kill him" (Gen. iv, 15), "because by this benefit he intended to lead the erring to conversion." St. Ambrose.

2. *His justice.* If God were to cast the sinner into the abyss of hell immediately after his crime, men would be inclined to accuse him of too great severity. But if He wait for a time, men must admit that divine justice demands punishment at last. The

parable on the barren fig tree is very appropriate in this place. Lk. xiii, 6-9.

3. *His power.* God, by punishing the sinner at last, manifests clearly that the wicked can never escape His avenging arm. "I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowl of the air; I will strike them." Osee vii, 12. The youngest of the Machabees threatened Antiochus, saying: "Thou that hast been the author of all mischief against the Hebrews, shalt not escape the hand of God." II Mach. vii, 31.

PART II.

WHY IS IT THAT GOD SUFFERS THE WICKED TO REMAIN IN THE SOCIETY OF THE JUST?

I. *For the benefit of the wicked,*

1. That he may convert them by the company of the just.

a. "It may happen that those who are cockle to-day, will be good wheat to-morrow." St. Augustine. God offers them his grace. "As I live," saith the Lord God, "I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." Ezech. xxxiii, 12.

b. This, indeed, happens very frequently, according to the testimony of all experience as well as of Scripture. Magdalen, Zacheus, the thief on the right hand. When James and John said to Jesus: Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? he rebuked them, saying: You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save. Lk. ix, 52-56. The same men, whose destruction the two Apostles had demanded, received cheerfully the doctrine of Jesus Christ after his Ascension. Act. viii, 14.

c. The most effectual means for the conversion of the wicked is the society of the just. "Sinners would never be converted, if there were no examples of the good." St. Gregory.

2. That he may reward them for their good works. Nabuchodonosor was made king of Egypt, because, at the command of God, he had conquered Tyre. Ezech. xxix, 19. Rahab the

harlot was saved and permitted to dwell in the midst of Israel, because she hid the messengers whom the Lord had sent to spy out Jericho. Josue vi, 25. This is also confirmed by daily experience.

II. *For the benefit of the just.*

1. They are tried by the wicked. "The wicked man lives not only, that he may be converted, but also that the pious man may be tried by him." St. Augustine.

The wicked preserve often the virtue of the just. God employed Sennacherib, Nabuchodonosor, the Philistines and other persecutors of the Israelites to lead his chosen people to sincere penance. He calls the Assyrian "the rod and the staff of my anger." Isai. x, 5. Soldiers cannot prove nor preserve their valor except when they have enemies to fight against. The Roman Senate would not consent to have Lacedaemon razed, that the Roman youth might have occasion to prove their courage.

2. The reward of the just is increased by persevering in virtue in the midst of the wicked. "Who hath been tried hereby, and made perfect, he shall have glory everlasting. He that could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed, and could do evil things, and hath not done them." Ecclus. xxxi, 10.

Laselve.

VI.

SPIRITUAL WATCHFULNESS.

"While men were asleep, his enemy came, and oversowed cockle among the wheat." Mt. xiii, 25. Thus Satan sows cockle—sin—into our hearts, whilst we are asleep as regards the affair of our salvation. Therefore let us be watchful over ourselves!

PART I.

WHEREIN THIS WATCHFULNESS CONSISTS.

1. *We should keep diligent watch over the inmost recesses of our soul:*

a. Our thoughts, desires and inclinations. "He that with fixed eyes deviseth wicked things, biting his lips bringeth evil to pass." Prov. xvi, 30. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies." Mt. xv, 19. "Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured." James i, 14.

b. Our imagination, which represents things in shapes and lights not in accord with reality and truth.

c. Our intention in the performance of works that are good in themselves. "Take heed that you do not pour justice before men, that you may be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward from your Father, who is in heaven." Mt. vi, 1.

2. *We should keep diligent watch over the external* faculties of our body, and their movements.

a. Our senses:

Our eyes. "I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin." Job xxxi, 1. "I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." Mt. v, 28.

Our ears. "Hedge in thy ears with thorns; hear not a wicked tongue." Ecclus. xxviii, 28.

Our tongue. "Make doors and bars to thy mouth." Ecclus. xxviii, 28. "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." I Pet. iii, 10.

b. Our actions. "From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves." I Thess. v, 22. "Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh." Mt. xviii, 7.

PART II.

IS THIS WATCHFULNESS NECESSARY?

1. It is demanded in consequence of our corrupt nature.

a. We are frail creatures by original sin, so that our understanding, will and memory, our moral feelings, and our body itself, are debilitated.

b. We are rendered the more frail in consequence of our actual sins. Whenever a man falls, concupiscence receives new nourishment, and the soul, deeper wounds. "Watch ye and pray, that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak." Mt. xxvi, 41.

2. It is demanded because of the ferocity and craftiness of our enemies:

a. Of wicked men. "Fear not those that kill the body, and cannot kill the soul: but rather him that can destroy both, body and soul in hell." Mt. x, 28.

b. Of Satan, who according to the Gospel of this day, came and sowed cockle among the wheat, while men were asleep. "Be sober, and watch, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." I Pet. v, 8.

3. It is demanded by grace.

a. However powerful grace may be, we must co-operate with it. "By the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace in me has not been void; but I have labored more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me." I Cor. xv, 10.

b. Although grace has been promised us, it has its certain times of visitation. We should employ well the time of visitation. "To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Ps. xciv, 8. The Foolish Virgins.

Peroration: Let us then constantly and diligently watch over ourselves, lest the enemy sow cockle in the field of our heart, and lest in the time of the harvest we be of the number of those who shall be cast into the furnace of fire. Mt. xiii, 42.

P. A. Scherer.

Sixth Sunday After Epiphany.

V.

THE CHURCH'S PROGRESS.

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed." Mt. xiii, 31. Our Holy Church is often accused of being in a state of stagnation, and of being inimical to true progress. If this accusation were founded on truth, the Church could not be the kingdom of heaven; for this is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which becometh a tree. Happily, the reproach is utterly without foundation. On the contrary, we witness in the Church true progress in three directions.

I. PROGRESS IN HER INNER LIFE.

As in Jesus Christ himself, so in the Church we distinguish a divine and a human side. On the divine side, the very idea of progress is out of the question. It is as impossible as the idea of a more perfect Christ, a more perfect God. In this connection we may repeat the word of St. Paul: "Though we or an Angel from heaven, preach a Gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." Gal. i, 8. But on the human side, we admire a great progress in the Church.

1. As to the divine doctrine, it can neither decrease nor increase; but the deposit of faith has been, from time to time, more and more investigated, and explored in its consequences.

2. We notice a grand development of the formal portions of her public worship. The plain forms, under which the early Christians celebrated the divine mysteries, have grown into magnificent ceremonies, which are the object of the admiration of both the faithful and of infidels.

3. Her precepts and counsels promulgated in the sermon on the mount, have been admirably developed, regulating all the various branches of Christian life.

4. Even in her divine constitution, we perceive an admirable development. How intimate, for instance, is, now-a-days,

the union and intercourse between the head of the Church and her members, bishops as well as laity!

Verily, he who denies true progress in the Church of Christ does not know what he speaks about. If he expects the truth to be subjected to the caprices of men, he may just as well rebuke the stars in heaven for their obstinacy in retaining their positions among the spheres, and for emitting the same bright and peaceful light as on the day of creation.

II. PROGRESS IN HER LOCAL EXTENSION.

The progress of the Church in the second direction, viz. her local extension, is manifest to the whole world.

1. True to her vocation as the Church of the nations, the Catholic Church has become the tree that expands its branches over all parts of the world, inviting the nations of the Old and New World to dwell under her shadow. As far as the sun of the firmament sends forth his rays, so far the sun of men sends forth his rays of truth and grace.

2. And this Church of the world is accused of stagnation? So far is this absurd charge from having even an appearance of truth, that it is, on the contrary, the fact that there is not a truly civilized people on the face of the earth which did not receive its civilization from this venerable mother of the regenerated human race.

We, her privileged children, who are taught to pray, "Thy kingdom come," should, by praying, and almsgiving, and by our holy lives, contribute our share towards promoting the growth of this wonderful tree of life. Every tree gains growth, when all its parts, from the root to the summit, are in active and harmonious commotion.

III. PROGRESS IN VIRTUE.

1. The children of the Church must grow in virtue.

a. In divine knowledge. "We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing; being fruitful in

every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Col. i, 9. "This is life everlasting; that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii, 3. Are you indeed solicitous to nourish your soul, which is thirsting after truth, by hearing attentively the word of God, and by reading religious books?

b. From knowledge charity must proceed. "Performing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in him who is the head, Christ." Eph. iv, 15. What does it profit a man to have the knowledge of angels, but without charity? He is a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. But as we can never love Jesus Christ, as he deserves, we should at least strive to love him more and more. Charity is manifested by the observance of the commandments. "If any one love me, he will keep my word." John xiv, 23. Then we are to experience the truth of the word: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden is light."

2. This noble progress is manifested in our Church indeed. How many of her children are now saints, reigning with God in heaven! How many devote themselves entirely to the promotion of the divine glory, and to the words of charity; and how numerous are our charitable institutions and religious orders!

Peroration: Oh! that the kingdom of God would grow in our hearts unto the resemblance to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and perfect model!

Joseph Ehrler.

VI.

ON ACTUAL GRACE.

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed." Mt. xiii, 31. By the "leaven" spoken of in the parable of the Gospel, we may understand, sanctifying grace, which permeates our souls, transforming them, and rendering them pleasing in the eyes of God; and by the "mustard-seed," actual grace. For, although, like the mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds, little regarded, yet it produces fruit of infinite

value. I have chosen actual grace as the subject of our present meditation, and will show you: 1, What is actual grace? 2, Why we should highly estimate it, and how employ it well.

I. WHAT IS ACTUAL GRACE?

Actual grace consists in this, that God enlightens our understanding, and inclines our will to avoid evil, and both to will and to do what is good. In order that you may understand this the better, I invite your attention to the life of St. Ignatius Loyola. St. Ignatius was, before his conversion, an officer in the Spanish army, and led a somewhat worldly life. Darkness reigned in his soul, as he did not know his own faults, nor did he see the way leading to heaven. He was afflicted with spiritual blindness. His will was not attached to God, but to the vanities of this world. Once upon a time, whilst lying ill of wounds he had received in battle, he began to read the lives of the Saints. On a sudden his understanding was enlightened, so that he saw clearly the necessity of amending his life, and of serving God, by avoiding evil and doing good.

But to know what we ought to do for the salvation of our soul, is not sufficient; we must also be willing to do what we acknowledge to be necessary. Therefore God helped Ignatius by piercing his heart with a great horror of his sins, and with a great desire to lead henceforth a virtuous life. Thus God inclined his will to avoid evil, and to do what is good. Ignatius followed the light and impulse of divine grace, confessing his sins and amending his life.

This divine assistance, by which his understanding was enlightened and his will enkindled, was what we call actual grace.

2. We, also, receive many actual graces—the sinner, that he may be converted, the just one, that he may avoid sin and perform good works. God calls the sinner to penance by afflicting him with dangerous diseases; by sudden deaths amongst his friends; by words from the pulpit, or in the confessional, which move his heart. All this is actual grace.

Even in daily occurrences we should recognize the grace of God. For instance, when you hear a voice admonishing you to

say your morning prayer, to resist a temptation of anger, to despise the enticements of your companions, it is the voice of God speaking to your heart, it is actual grace.

II. WE OUGHT TO ESTEEM HIGHLY THIS GRACE OF GOD.

1. For it is the call of God to you. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open to me the gate, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Apoc. iii, 20. Therefore, whenever the grace of God warns you against sin, or exhorts you to make your confession, it is just the same, as if Jesus himself appeared before you, saying, My son, my daughter, shun that bad company, go to confession next Sunday, do it for the love of me. Will you not do as much for Him who rescued you from eternal death? If there be any amongst your friends who has rescued you from temporal life, could you refuse to grant him whatever he might ask you?

2. Actual grace has been bought by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Could any one of you be so hard-hearted as to dishonor and cast away the daily earnings of his father's sweat and toil? To merit grace for you, the Son of God toiled and suffered thirty-three long years, and at last shed his blood on the Cross. And will you make no use of it but squander it away?

3. Great will be the advantages derived from a faithful cooperation with divine grace.

a. They will be great to the sinner. If St. Ignatius, or any other of the Saints, who once led sinful lives, had not cooperated with the grace offered to them, if instead of confessing their sins, they had continued along the beaten track again, he would not now be a partaker in the joys of heaven. The condemned in hell could tell you, if they were permitted, what to them have been the dreadful consequences of turning a deaf ear to God's call. If God sends you, poor sinner, the rays of his grace, harden not your heart. It may be the last warning. "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace!" Lk. xix, 42.

b. If you be in the state of sanctifying grace, your merits are increased, whenever you follow the divine inspiration to

pray, to be patient, etc., that is to say, sanctifying grace is increased in you, so that you are more acceptable to your God, and the beauty of your soul shines in still brighter light. How much trouble do women and men give themselves to increase the beauty of their bodies. Should you give yourself less to increase the beauty of your soul? But what is more than this, your reward is greater in heaven, and your purgatory is shortened.

If, however, you do not co-operate with divine grace, you cause your own ruin. If the poor beggar casts away the alms you gave him, you are disinclined to take pity on him a second time. If you drop one link of a chain, you drop the chain itself. If you refuse to accept one grace, you may have lost the whole series of graces, which was prepared for you, had you co-operated with one you unfortunately rejected.

Oh! how rich would you now be, had you been faithful servants during the many years of your past life!

Henceforth, when God speaks in your heart, listen to him, and do his holy will.

J. Schmitt.

Septuagesima Sunday.

V.

ALL MEN MUST LABOR IN GOD'S VINEYARD.

Whenever God creates a man, he sends him into his vineyard to labor, and in the evening of life he will pay everyone his hire. But, unlike the laborers in the Gospel, all of whom had to perform the same kind of work, those engaged in God's vineyard have to follow various employments, according to the various ages, conditions and vocations of life. And every one will receive his pay, not according to the kind of work he has done, but according to the faithfulness with which he has performed it.

I. GOD INVITES EVERY AGE.

1. *Children.*

a. To guard their innocence. Woe to that man who, by the scandal he gives, prevents children from performing their day's work. "It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Mt. xviii, 6.

b. To exercise obedience. "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father; and attend that you may know prudence." Prov. iv, 1. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is just." Eph. vi, 1.

2. *Youth.*

a. To develop the faculties of the soul. "He that maketh his house high, seeketh a downfall; and he that refuseth to learn, shall fall into evils." Prov. xvii, 16. "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Act. vii, 22. "Jesus increased in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men." Lk. ii, 52.

b. To develop the faculties of the body. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Gen. iii, 19. "The valiant woman hath sought wool and flax, and hath wrought by the

counsel of her hands. * * * She hath girded her loins with strength, and hath strengthened her arm." Prov. xxxi, 13, 17.

3. *Adults.*

To use their talents,

a. For their own welfare. "Thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands: blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee." Ps. cxxvii, 2. "Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom." Prov. vi, 6.

b. For the benefit of their neighbor. "Let him that stole, steal now no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him who is in need." Eph. iv, 28. "Abraham gave all his possessions to Isaac." Gen. xxv, 5.

c. For the promotion of God's honor. God is a jealous God, who avenges the neglect of his honor. "Because my house is desolate, and you make haste every man to his own house, therefore the heavens over you were stayed from giving dew; and the earth was hindered from yielding her fruits." Aggeus i, 9-11. The unprofitable servant who had buried his talent, was cast into exterior darkness.

II. GOD INVITES BOTH THE JUST AND THE SINNER.

1. *The Just*

a. To increase in sanctity. "He that is just, let him be justified still." Apoc. xxii, 11. "Be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." I Cor. xv, 58.

b. To strive for resemblance to Jesus Christ. "Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son: that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Rom. viii, 29.

c. To be perfect as the Heavenly Father. "Be you, therefore, perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect." Mt. v, 28.

2. *Sinners:*

a. Infidels, to embrace the faith. "This man (John the Baptist) came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all

men might believe through him." John i, 7. See the conversion of the eunuch. Act. viii, 27-38. Also of the keeper of the prison, Act. xvi, 27-33.

b. *The wicked*, to do penance. "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mt. iii, 2. "Bring forth fruit worthy of penance." Lk. iii, 8.

III. GOD INVITES THE PRIESTS AND THE FLOCK.

1. *The priests*,

a. *To instruct* the people. "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge; and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the Angel of the Lord of Hosts." Mal. ii, 7. "Go ye, and teach all nations." Mt. xxviii, 19.

b. *To sanctify* the faithful by the administration of the holy sacraments. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Mt. xxviii, 19. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord." James v, 14.

c. *To edify* the faithful by word and deed. "Forasmuch as you are zealous of spirits, seek to abound unto the edifying of the church." I Cor. xiv, 12. "Let all things be done unto edification." v. 26. "In all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity." Titus ii, 7.

2. *The flock*,

a. *To obey.* "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls, that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this is not expedient for you." Heb. xiii, 17. "Let every soul be subject to higher powers." Rom. xiii, 1.

b. *To serve.* "By charity of the spirit serve one another." Gal. v, 13. "Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh, not serving to the eye, as pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God." Col. iii, 22.

c. *To work.* "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." II Thess. iii, 10.

Peroration: Let us make again the firm resolution to fulfill faithfully the duties imposed on us by our state of life. If priests and laity were what they ought to be, this earth would become a paradise.

Tirinus.

VI.

SIGNS OF ELECTION, AND OF REPROBATION.

"Many are called, but few chosen"—an awful announcement from the lips of Eternal Truth. "Who knows," said St. Bernard once in a sermon, "whether the names of those whom I see before me, are written in heaven?" It is expedient for us not to know what will be our portion in the next world, that we may "work our salvation with fear and trembling." Philip. ii, 12. Yet, as in nature future events are sometimes indicated and foreshadowed by certain signs, so there are certain signs from which we may infer, with great probability, what will be our lot in eternity.

I. SIGNS OF FUTURE ELECTION.

1. *If you sincerely hate what is evil.*

a. By seriously detesting sin. "Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent." Ecclus. xxi, 2. "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? or who shall rest in thy holy hill? He that walketh without blemish, and worketh justice." Ps. xiv, 1.

b. By doing penance immediately after sin, and by persevering in penance. "If the wicked do penance for all his sins * * * living he shall live, and shall not die." Ezech. xviii, 21. "And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way, and God had mercy." Jonas iii, 10.

2. *If you seriously endeavor to perform the following works:*

a. To hear the word of God diligently and attentively. "Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned,

cometh to me." John vi, 45. "He that is of God, heareth the words of God;" viii, 45.

b. To receive frequently, and worthily, the Holy Sacraments. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life." John vi, 45.

c. To exercise patience. "Patience is necessary for you; that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise." Heb. x, 36. "In your patience you shall possess your souls." Lk. xxi, 19. "Who are these that are clothed in white robes? and whence are they come? * * * They are they who come out of great tribulation." Apoc. vii, 13.

d. To have mercy on your neighbor. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Mt. v, 7. "Come ye Blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom. * * * For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat, etc. Mt. xxv, 34. "Alms delivereth from death; and and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting." Tobias xii, 9.

e. To preserve chastity, as it is required by your state of life. "He that loveth cleanness of heart, for the grace of his lips shall have the King for his friend." Prov. xxii, 11. "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God." Mt. v, 8. The Evangelist describes this singular blessedness Apoc. xiv, 3 ff:—a new canticle; the following of the Lamb.

f. To venerate the Blessed Virgin both by imitating and invoking her. The Church applies to her the words: "He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord." Prov. viii, 35; and, "In me is all hope of life." Ecclus. xxiv, 25.

II. SIGNS OF FUTURE REPROBATION.

1. *A life of tepidity:*

a. By being negligent in hearing the word of God, which St. Gregory regards as a sign of reprobation. "Therefore you hear not the words of God, because you are not of God." John viii, 47.

b. By receiving the Holy Sacraments rarely, without devotion, or even sacrilegiously. "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself; not discerning the body of the Lord." I Cor. xi, 19.

c. By disparaging, or, after the manner of heretics, even vilifying the veneration of the Blessed Virgin. "But he that shall sin against me, shall hurt his own soul. All that hate me love death." Prov. viii, 35. He that does not take a delight in saying Aves, will not take a delight in saying Paters.

2. *A life of sin:*

a. By being impatient in afflictions and tribulations, and complaining of God and one's neighbor.

b. By being merciless and uncharitable. "He that loveth not, abideth in death." I John iii, 14. The wicked servant, Mt. xviii, 23 ff.

c. By being a slave to carnal passion. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor sodomites shall possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. vi, 9.

3. *An impenitent life:*

a. By not detesting sin, but committing it without shame and fear. "He that loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul." Ps. x. 6. "The soul that sinneth, the same shall die." Ezech, xviii, 20.

b. By persevering in sin, deferring penance from day to day. "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. For his wrath shall come on a sudden; and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee." Ecclus. v, 8. "A hard heart shall fare evil at the last." iii, 27.

c. By living in a bad habit, or by wilfully exposing one's self to the proximate occasions of sin. "A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii, 6. "He that loveth danger, shall perish in it." Ecclus. iii, 27.

Peroration: Verily, "thy justice is as the mountains of God; thy judgments are a great deep." Ps. xxxv, 7. There-

fore let us not scrutinize, but adore in profound humility. Let us lead such a life, that the signs of election may be easily distinguished in it. "Neither divine grace alone, nor you alone, but divine grace with you: He who created you without you, will not save you without you." St. Augustine.

Vogel.

Sexagesima Sunday.

V.

THE HIGH DIGNITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

"A sower went out to sow his seed." Lk. viii, 5. The words of the Gospel of this day need not, as St. Augustine remarks, to be explained, but to be observed. Both I and you must observe them: I, because, as the sower went out to sow his seed, so the minister of the Gospel appears in your midst to sow the word of God upon the ground of your heart. Therefore, I am obliged to sow the seed, as I received it from the Holy Church, with which the heavenly wheat has been deposited. "I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom; declaring to you the testimony of Christ. For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." I Cor. ii, 1. And you who hear me, must have your heart prepared that the word of God concerning you may not fall by the wayside, nor upon a rock, nor among thorns, but upon good ground, where it will yield fruit a hundred-fold. That you may hold the word of God in high veneration, I will explain, that is the voice from heaven, the bread of our soul, the mirror of our heart, and the sanction of our life.

1. *The word of God, the voice from heaven.*

It is not the word of the priest, but the message of God sent to you through the priest. If St. John calls the Son of God the Word of God, he reveals to us, at the same time, the dignity of the Christian preaching, which is nothing else than the word of God.

The words which God spoke to the patriarchs and prophets, and through them to the whole world, are no doubt venerable words, because they are a voice from heaven. But last of all he has spoken to us by his Son. And the priest repeats to the faithful the teachings of the Son.

For there is this great difference between the word of God, as it is preached in our churches, and what is proclaimed as the word of God in other places of worship, that the Catholic priest has no right to preach opinions that are not in conformity with the teaching of the Church, "the pillar and ground of truth." All that is our own, is the dress in which we array the truth.

Therefore, if you desire to meet a divine welcome, after you have left this your earthly tabernacle, follow here below your divine Teacher. "He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God." John viii, 47.

2. *The word of God, the bread of our soul.*

"Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Mt. iv, 4. As the plant cannot live by the juice alone, that it receives from the earth, but needs the light and dew of heaven, so natural science is not a sufficient nourishment of our soul.

In fact, the word of God is a consolation in *despondency:* "Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou disquiet me. Hope in God, the salvation of my countenance and my God. I will go the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth." Ps. xlii. It is a consolation in poverty, which does not appear as a real evil in the light of the divine word, etc. Which of you has not experienced in his own soul a repetition of the miracle wrought on the day of Pentecost? All understood St. Peter's word, and all those who were of good will, had the wants of their soul satisfied. The word of God is the Manna from heaven having all sweetness within it.

Consequently, as he that would not give food to his body would commit corporal suicide, so he who denies the word of God to his soul is guilty of spiritual suicide.

3. *The word of God is the mirror of our heart.*

Lack of self-knowledge is one of the most deplorable consequences of the first sin. Whilst we see the least faults in the life of our neighbor, our eye is dim with regard to our own sins. Therefore, we are in need of a friend to warn us and to hold a mirror before our eyes, in which we may behold the features of our own soul. This our friend is the preacher of the Gospel, and the mirror he holds before us, is the word of God.

That such is the end to be reached by the word of God is clearly expressed in Holy Scripture. God calls his word a hammer that strikes souls hardened in sin; a sword that penetrates into the depth of the soul; a light that disperses darkness; a fire that consumes all sin; and a leaven that leavens, so to say, the whole soul.

History has recorded the fact, that the conversion of innumerable Saints commenced with hearing or reading the word of God. Daily experience bears testimony to the same effect of the divine word upon sinners.

If you would come here every Lord's day to hear the word of God, with the intention to know the condition of your souls, it would truly be "a lamp to your feet, and a light to your paths." Ps. cxviii, 105. The common cause of sins is negligence in hearing the word of God. Vide John xii, 48.

4. *The word of God is the sanction of our life.*

For it is our sweetest consolation, and, to many, almost their only consolation. I know that, in these words, I speak the mind of many of you.

Human life in its hardships is well depicted Job vii, 1-3. After having directed your gaze towards the dust of the earth during six days, the word of God, preached on Sunday, points out to you a better world, speaking to you of your Father in heaven, of our first-born Brother, who took our own form of a servant, and of the Holy Ghost, who transforms our soul unto life everlasting. It speaks to us of the Saints in heaven, of their joys and blessedness, and of what they have done and suffered to attain their present glory, and exhorts us to follow their ex-

ample, that we may one day exchange this wretched life for a glorious life. Deprive men of the word of God, and the earth is turned into a wilderness—a place of despair.

The word of God is a consolation in our many labors and afflictions. It explains to us the purpose and reward of them, and the final end of human life and its struggles.

Peroration: The word of God will be the food of our soul in heaven, also, when we celebrate that Lord's Day which knows no evening. It will be the cause and object of our blessedness and riches, if here below we have made it our consolation in our misery and poverty.

Joseph Ehrler.

VI.

THE POWER OF FAITH.

"A sower went out to sow his seed." Lk. viii, 5. Who is the sower in the Gospel? No one else but the only-begotten Son of the Father in heaven. During the three years of his public life, he sowed his seed in the hearts of men. And when the evening of his great day-work approached, he commissioned his apostles to continue his work. "Go ye and teach all nations." Mt. xxviii, 19. Henceforth "their sound went over all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world." Rom. x, 18. The synagogue was shut, and paganism was shaken to its foundation. The face of the earth was renewed, and a new generation arose, the generation of Saints. *Such is the power of faith.*

We will now consider,

1. How this power was manifested in the course of time.
2. What are the consequences resulting therefrom.

I.

1. *Faith has performed great things from the very beginning.*
   a. By destroying the ancient world.

This was a world of darkness and wickedness. The nations sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and "changed the

glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things." Rom. i, 23. They were filled with all iniquity. This ancient world, filled with unnatural vices, was soon destroyed by the Gospel, so that Tertullian (born in 160) could say to the Gentiles: "We Christians are of yesterday, and yet replenish your cities, islands, castles," etc.

b. By building up a new world.

The early Christians converted from paganism are the models of Christian perfection; these "children of light, and children of the day" (I Thess. v, 5). How tender was their fraternal charity and mercy! "The multitude of the believers had but one heart and one soul." Act. iv, 32.

2. *Faith has performed great things in subsequent centuries.*

a. By regulating the relation between superiors and subjects. In paganism, the king exercised an absolute power over the lives and property of his subjects. How beneficial is the peaceful revolution wrought by Christianity!

b. By regulating the family life. In paganism the man was legally a tyrant, the woman his slave, the children were exposed to the arbitrary power of their father, who had even the right to take their life. Faith established the Christian family. "Husbands, love your wives; and be not bitter toward them." Col. iii, 19. "Wives, be subject to your husbands." v, 18. "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder." Mt. xix, 9. "You, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." Eph. vi, 4. "Honor thy father and thy mother." Mt. xix, 19. By these injunctions the happiness of families is established.

c. Faith has performed great things with regard to individuals. Every human heart finds life and consolation in faith. It gives an answer to all important questions, encourages in all tribulations.

d. By leading man along the path to heaven. How many heroic deeds have been performed to attain eternal glory! All the Elect now standing before the throne of the Lamb, have been led there by faith.

II.

The consequences resulting from the above, are:

1. *Regarding faith:*

a. It is God's work.

No human power could ever perform what faith has performed. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes." Ps. xcvii, 23. "That which appeareth foolish of God, is wiser than men; and that which appeareth weakness of God, is stronger than men." I Cor. i, 25.

b. It is an indelible work.

The Church, persecuted by kings and peoples, stands immovable in the midst of ruins. "The gates of hell shall not prevail." Mt. xvi, 18. "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed." Dan. ii, 44.

2. *With regard to us, faith is*

a. The source of great joy.

We know the end for which we were created. We know the way leading to heaven. We do not follow artificial fables (I Pet. i, 16). We are not children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. (Eph. iv, 4).

b. The source of great consolation.

Faith is the work of God. It has stood the test of time and persecution. Therefore, as the great temptest arose in our days, so that St. Peter's ship is covered with waves, we trust in the Lord, who said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Lk. xxi, 33. Let devils and men be combined in assaulting the Church: "non praevalebunt."

Peroration: Let us be thankful for the grace of faith, by confessing it before the whole world, and by conforming our lives to the teachings of this our faith.

Joseph Schuen.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

V.

WHAT THE SACRED PASSION OF JESUS TEACHES.

Filled as they were with earthly hopes, as was the whole of the nation, and making no distinction between the first and second coming of the Messiah, it is not astonishing to us that the Apostles could not understand the prophecy of their Master's Passion. To us all that was foretold has been fulfilled. Do we, however, now understand more about the accomplishment of what was predicted than the Apostles once understood of the prophecy? Perhaps we know very little about it, for it is a mystery of inscrutable depth, where "deep calleth on deep." Ps. xli, 8. If, in obedience to the invitation of the Holy Church, we contemplate the sacred Passion of our Lord during the forty ensuing days, what will it teach us? The greatness of divine love, the worth of our immortal souls, and the malice of sin.

I. THE GREATNESS OF DIVINE LOVE.

1. How is it manifested?

a. God's perfections—his omnipotence, wisdom, bounty, justice, etc.—are manifest from his works. "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the word, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Rom. i, 20.

b. Divine love is manifested especially by the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption.

The love of the Father who gave his only Son. "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son." John iii, 16. The love of the Son. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv, 13. The love of the Holy Ghost, who accomplished the sacred mystery as "the power of the Most High." Lk. i, 35.

2. How great this love is? Infinite—boundless.

a. On the whole, it is love unto death, "to the end" (John xiii, 1), the greatest love, greater than the love evinced

by his birth (se nascens dedit socium), or by his institution of the Holy Eucharist (convescens in edulium), or by his once becoming our reward exceeding great (se regnans dat in praemium). For it is as the price of our redemption that he gives himself to death (se moriens in pretium), a love so great that to the Gentiles, judging from the light of natural reason, it appeared as foolishness. I Cor. i, 23.

b. In particular the greatness of this love is manifest, 1, from the depth of the humiliation of the Son of God in his Incarnation, debasing himself, taking the form of a servant (Phil.p. ii, 7); in his Sacred Passion, "a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" Ps. xxi, 7; in his death, being reputed with the wicked. Mark xv, 28. Moreover, his love is manifest, 2, from the duration of his sufferings, comprising all his lifetime, so that he was truly the "Lamb which was slain from the beginning of the world" (Apoc. xiii, 8), and thus he loved us with an everlasting love. Jerem. xxxi, 3. 3, From the extent of his sufferings—in soul and body, from his Father and from men. 4, From the end of his Passion—on Christ's side a sacrifice honoring God infinitely, on the side of the Jews an outrage against God. Now you see what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, now you know "the charity of Christ, which surpasseth knowledge." Eph. iii, 18, 19.

3. We must be thankful for this love, by loving Jesus in return.

a. It is our sacred duty. "Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us." I John iv. 1ff. "For the charity of Christ presseth us." II Cor. v, 14.

b The quality of this our love: It must stand the test of the cross; i. e., of suffering, and it must be a cross in itself, because it should never be sufficient in our own opinion. "The cross is the torment of our heart, because we do not serve God better." St. Anselm.

c. To be destitute of this love, is a great sin, for it separates from the communion of Christ. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." I Cor. xvi, 22.

II. WORTH OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

1. According to God's judgment her worth is infinite:

a. By nature, being an immortal spirit, and God's image. You honor the picture of your parents, ergo.

b. By grace, so that we are made partakers of the divine nature (II Pet. i, 4), deified, *secundum quid;* so that of her also it may be said, that her God the Father hath sealed. John vi, 27.

c. From the great price paid to redeem her from sin. "You are bought with a great price" (I Cor. vi, 20), "not with corruptible gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." I Pet. i, 18, 19. Infinitely precious price! Infinite value of your soul! Infinite divine love! Application. Return God's love, do not give your soul into the hands of the devil—for a mere nothing.

III. MALICE OF SIN.

1. We comprehend its malice

a. From its results. Sin disturbed the order established by God (*a*) in heaven, ruining the angels: "Thou art brought to nothing, and thou shalt never be any more." Ezech. xxviii, 19. (*b*) On earth—in mankind and in the whole of nature. Wherefore St. Augustine calls sin "a dark simile of divine omnipotence."

b. Especially from the satisfaction required for it. For an infinite offence an infinite satisfaction was required by Eternal Justice.

2. It follows from this, that we should

a. Beware of sin for the future. It is sin only that renders us unhappy.

b. Repent of the sins of our past life. "Daughters of Jerusalem weep not over me; but weep for yourselves and for your children." Luke xxiii, 28.

Peroration: Love God, who loved you with everlasting love. Save your souls bought with so great a price. Shun sin that has murdered the Son of God on the cross.

P. N. Dijon.

VI.

THE HOLY CROSS THE SALVATION OF OUR TIMES.

"There is no salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Act. iv, 12. As the holy Cross, the object of our special devotion during Lent, has saved the world out of the deep misery of Paganism, so it is still the salvation of the world. The world is bleeding especially from three wounds, which St. John calls "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." They are the principal causes of our social miseries; and no cure of the sick and languishing human family can be effected, except by the Cross of our Saviour. In this Holy Cross we find the remedy

1. Against the concupiscence of the eyes;
2. Against the concupiscence of the flesh, and
3. Against the pride of life.

I.

Inordinate desire for earthly possessions—so-called Materialism—is the first wound of human society.

1. We are entitled to desire and work for the goods of this world. We are obliged to earn our bread in the sweat of our brow. Adam, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, etc. Although our eyes are directed towards heaven, our feet stand on the soil of the earth. Besides, it is our duty to exercise the faculties of body and soul with regard to earthly things also.

2. But men frequently treat the goods and riches of earth, not as means leading them to their eternal destiny, but as their destiny itself. Satan approached even the Saviour with this temptation, saying: "All these will I give thee, if, falling down, thou wilt adore me." Mt. iv, 9. The more faith and hope of life everlasting vanish in the heart of man, the more he will bow the knee before the golden calf, to adore it as his idol. And the number of these idolaters in our days is legion. To make money seems to be the only aim of their life. This materialistic ten-

dency in our days is the ruin of religious, moral, and social, order. All desire for spiritual things is suppressed, divine service neglected, the reception of the holy sacraments considered as useless. This greed of money is the mother of egotism, and the source of the many sins against charity.

3. What is the remedy against this public calamity? Statesmen will never find one. If they could distribute millions to every individual, the passion for money-getting would only be the more inflamed, as experience clearly teaches. There is no other remedy than the cure of the disease itself, viz.: of the inordinate desire for earthly goods.

This remedy lies in the Cross of our Saviour. There is no salvation in any other. Our Saviour hangs naked on the Cross. He is at last deprived of his garments, who was born in a stable, spent his youth in the house of a poor mother, and in his life had not where to lay his head. If it is our Christian vocation to resemble our Saviour, the concupiscence of the eyes is in utter contradiction of it.

II.

1. Man is very prone to seek his paradise on earth. Vide Wisd. ii, 6-9. Hence the unholy longing for forbidden enjoyments, so prevalent in our days, hence the shameless indulgence in lust and intemperance, fornication and adultery: contempt of the commandments of God and of the precepts of the Church.

2. The only remedy again is the Cross of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour hangs on the Cross, crowned with thorns, and his body one large wound. His hands and feet are pierced with cruel nails; his heart is pierced with a lance. Gall and vinegar are his drink. From the tree of the Cross the Son of God cries out to us: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Mt. xvi, 24.

III.

1. Every man carries the germ of pride in his own heart. He who has a vivid faith, will regard his true dignity as a child of God and heir of heaven. "Thou hast made him a little less

than the Angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor." Ps. viii, 6. But when man does not regard this his true dignity, his pride will seek nourishment in earthly honors and entire independence. He will revolt against divine and human law, and consider his own will the only guide of his life, saying with Pharao: "Who is the Lord, that I should hear his voice? I know not the Lord." Exodus ii, 5.

Human pride has taken alarming dimensions in our days. Modesty, which I might call the natural virtue of man, is scarcely known by name, whether in private or public life. Obedience of children towards their parents disappears before ridiculous pretences of false liberty. Each one supposes himself to be his own absolute master, according to Satan's saying: "You shall be as gods." Gen. iii, 5.

2. There is no salvation against the pride of life but in the Holy Cross. Our Saviour hangs on the tree of malediction. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Philip. ii, 8. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." Mt. xxvi, 39.

The Cross exhorts us to imitate the obedience of the great, infinite God; it reminds us of our own sinfulness, and at the same time, of our true dignity as children of God, which was restored by the shedding of the Holy Blood.

Peroration: Let us then frequently go up to Jerusalem with our own Jesus, and in all our tribulations let us raise our eyes up to the Holy Cross, in which alone we can find salvation during our sojourn on earth.

Joseph Ehrler.

First Sunday of Lent.

V.

AMBITION.

Satan, who dared to tempt the God-Man to inordinate ambition, approaches us frequently with the same temptation; and, unhappily, in many cases we yield to his enticements. We are by nature inclined to make a display before the world; and thus it is not difficult for the "Old Serpent" to plunge us into the vice of ambition. Let me say a few words to you on this vice, by way of a warning against it.

I. SIGNS OF AMBITION.

These are:

1. If you relate your good deeds with self-complacency and ostentation. The Pharisee in the temple may serve as example.

2. If in order to discover the opinion of others, you speak with great humility of your own actions, and thus try to induce the hearer to praise them.

3. If you are averse to listen to the praises bestowed upon others; or if you speak contemptuously of their praise-worthy deeds, and attempt to depreciate them.

4. If you are overmuch discouraged, because of failure in your undertakings.

5. If you discharge your daily duties with greater zeal, in presence of others, than when you are alone. Such people resemble those beggars, who pretend to shed tears when they see some one approach.

II. THE NATURE OF A LEGITIMATE AMBITION.

Ambition renders man

1. *Blind.*

a. The ambitious man does not know himself, this vice closing his eyes, that he may not see how miserable and wretched

he has become in consequence of original sin, how defiled his soul is with actual sins. "Thou sayest: I am rich and made wealthy, and I have need of nothing; and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Apoc. iii, 17.

b. His judgment concerning *honor* is not right. He regards the honor of men as a *great good*, wherein, contrary to his hope for happiness and contentment, he finds disquietude and vexation of mind on earth, and in eternity no reward. "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, that you may be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward from your Father, who is in heaven." Mt. vi, 1. He regards earthly honor as a *lasting good;* and yet how soon does it vanish! "Envy not the glory and riches of a sinner: for thou knowest not what his ruin shall be." Ecclus. ix, 16. "Vain honor is but a short reeling." St. Chrysostom.

c. He does not employ the right means of securing true honor, not striving for it by humility and Christian self-debasement, which is, according to the promise made by Jesus, the indispensable condition of gaining honor, but, after the manner of the Pharisees, by feigned virtue, and self-praise, by contempt and oppression of others.

d. He does not acknowledge his relation to God; considering not God, but himself and his own glory as the proper object of his actions, and denying in all his actions that whatever he possesses, he received from God.

2. *Presumptuous.*

a. The ambitious man is unjust toward God.

He lays claim to the greatness of God, and to the honor due to Him for whose glory all things have been created. He resembles, in consequence, the devil who attempted to rob God of his glory.

b. He is unjust toward his fellow-men.

He neglects his duties, offends by pride, connives at vice, is hard-hearted to the poor, and often robs virtue of its honor, by holding, in consequence of his unscrupulous machinations, a [illegible] to which a dishonest and unworthy man is not entitled.

3. *Unhappy.*

a. Ambition disturbs a man's mind. How great is his anxiety until he reaches the object sought for; and when he has obtained it, what cares and sorrows does he find heaped upon him. When Urban VII. put on the pontifical vestments, he said: "Who could believe that this fine texture galls so much him who wears it!" Moreover, ambition produces the same effects upon the mind, which drunkenness produces upon the body; each fresh indulgence increases the thirst. When failure withdraws the intoxicating draught, the disappointed man is inconsolable.

b. It tends to render a man contemptible in the eyes of his fellow-men, because a man greedy for honor, is pretty sure to become the sport of flatteries and hypocrisy.

c. It plunges a man into many sins, such as pride, wrath, envy, injustice of all kind.

d. It renders him liable to the signal punishment of God. "There is scarcely one leaf in Holy Bible, which does not warn us that God cannot bear the proud." St. Augustine.

III. REMEDIES AGAINST AMBITION.

1. Consider the vanity of human praise. It does not increase our worth, as man's reviling does not diminish it. Therefore let us be indifferent to both the praise and censure of men. "I am not conscious to myself of any kind: yet in this I am not justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." I Cor. iv, 3.

2. Never say anything for self-praise. The Saints by employing this means, attained to great humility.

3. Keep your good works and merits secret. "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret." Mt. vi, 3, 6.

4. Avoid in your actions, and even in your clothing, all peculiarity. He who does what no one else does attracts attention, which alone is perilous to humility.

5. Before you commence your works, give God the honor,

St. Bernard when tempted by ambition, used to exclaim: "For thee I have not commenced; for thee I shall not cease."

6. Humble yourself, by acknowledging the imperfection of all your works. For this purpose put the question to yourself: Who am I, and what is my work? I am dust and ashes,—a sinner. I owe all good things to the grace and charity of God.

Peroration: Let every one, by employing the above means, guard himself against a vice, to which man is so much inclined, and which renders him unhappy in time and in eternity.

Hunolt.

VI.

OUR STRUGGLE WITH THE DEVIL.

A marvellous scene! The King of light combating against the prince of darkness. "Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil." Mt. iv, 1. And the termination of this combat! Satan is overcome three times, so as to leave the Son of God. "Then the devil left him." We meet the same tempter on our way, and are obliged to assume the combat against him. "Our wrestling is * * * against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." Eph. vi, 12. Everyone knows this by experience. That we may the easier detect our enemy, and thus have better hope of obtaining the palm of victory, let us to-day consider this combat with the devil.

It is a combat,

I. Not to be undervalued;

II. But to be overcome.

PART I.

We should not undervalue our combat against Satan,

1. *On account of the enemy.*

He is

a. A powerful enemy.

Although Christ has overcome the devil, a great power is left to him, of which he will not be deprived before the consummation of time. This is manifest from the names bestowed upon him in Holy Scripture, as, for example, "lion" I Pet. v, 8; "dragon" Apoc. xii. 7; "the prince of this world" John xvi, 11; "ruler of the world of this darkness" Eph. vi, 12.

b. A cunning enemy.

"The evil spirit attempts by countless machinations to render mankind unhappy." St. Ambrose. "Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light." II Cor. xi, 14. In particular he avails himself of the natural weakness of every one of us in order to assault us. Thus he availed himself of the avaricious disposition of Judas Iscariot to induce him to betray his Lord and Master.

c. A watchful enemy.

The devil sleeps not. "*Circuit*" says the Apostle (I Pet. v, 8), "*he goeth about.*" We are accordingly exposed to his assaults, in youth and old age, and in the days of health, and of sickness.

2. *On account of the consequences resulting from this combat.*

He will fall a prey to the devil. To him the sentence will be addressed: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." Mt. xxv, 41. And the infinitely unhappy soul will be rejected for ever, suffering indescribable torments. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. viii, 12.

b. He who overcomes will be exalted for all eternity.

"To him that shall overcome, I will grant to sit with me in my throne." Apoc. iii, 21. "He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." Apoc. iii, 5.

Therefore let us in good earnest "fight the good fight." I Tim. vi, 12. Far from us be pusillanimity and despondency.

PART II.

In the combat against the devil we are able to overcome. Wherefore?

1. Because we fight under an invincible leader, Jesus Christ:

a. He leads the way.

The Lord himself fought the fight against hell. "For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the devil." I John iii, 8. The Son of David fought against the infernal Goliath and slew him. Therefore if we combat like him, the victory will be ours. The Gospel of to-day informs us of the manner in which Jesus overcame his enemy: with firmness, and with the sword of the word of God.

b. He assists us in our combat.

Jesus does not forsake us in the day of peril. "I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee." Jerem. xxx, 11. But if the Lord takes side with us, we have no reason to fear the enemy. "Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night; of the arrow that flieth in the day; of the business that walketh about in the dark; of invasion, or of the noon-day devil." Ps. xc. 5, 6. St. Antony, patriarch of monks, often defied the devils in their weakness, saying, "I fear you not; you cannot separate me from the love of Christ."

2. *We fight in invulnerable armour.*

St. Paul (Eph. vi, 11-18) exhorting us "to put on the armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the snares of the devil," assigns as our breast-plate, justice; as our shield, faith; and as our sword, the word of God.

In this armour "you will be able to extinguish all the darts of the most wicked one." Eph. vi, 16.

3. Our strength is restored by the most invigorating means. They are

a. Prayer.

The praying Christian is invincible. "If you will know the allurements of the devil and escape his snares, pray." St. Bonaventure.

b. Holy Communion.

By receiving the Bread of Life, we are most intimately united with Jesus Christ, and obtain admirable strength, to resist

the assaults of the devil. We return from the Communion table as lions breathing fire, as St. Chrysostom says.

4. We are aided in our combat by the most powerful allies, being assisted

a. By the angels of God.

"The Angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear him, and shall deliver them." Ps. xxxiii, 8. An Angel protected Judith in the camp of Holofernes. "Angels came and ministered to Jesus." Mt. vi, 11.

b. By the Saints of God.

It is of faith that the glorified servants of God love their brethren, pray for them and succor them in their needs. (Conc. Trid. sess. xxv, de invoc. Sanct.) Especially, we are protected by our Patron Saints.

Peroration: Let us then, strengthened by constant prayer and frequent Communion, and struggling in the company of Angels and Saints, follow our great leader, Jesus Christ, in combating the devil. We are sure of victory and the reward prepared for the victor. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him." James i, 12.

Joseph Schuen.

Second Sunday of Lent.

V.

IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE WITH JESUS.

What could be more consoling to the poor and fatigued pilgrim on the face of the earth, than the kind invitation of Jesus: "Come to me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you," and the assertion of Peter: "It is good for us to be here?" Also the Holy Church invites us affectionately during the sacred time of Lent to become intimately united with Jesus; for which purpose she represents him to our meditation as our bridegroom bedewed with his own atoning blood, and exhorts us to become reconciled with him in our Easter-confession and Communion. Oh! that we might all be convinced, how good it is for us to be with Jesus. It is good

I. FOR THE SINNER.

1. *We all belong, more or less, to this class.* "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I John i, 8. Yet are there many who are not willing to acknowledge their sinfulness, or if they do acknowledge it, who feel no sorrow, because they are not humble. Hence neglect of confession.

2. *It is not good to be in sin.* Sin destroys the peace of families, and of congregations, and deprives the soul of inner peace; everlasting vengeance hanging, like the sword of Damocles, over the head of the guilty. Man may at times lull his conscience to sleep, but when once awakened, its sting is the more fearful, here and hereafter.

3. *It is good for every penitent sinner to be with Jesus.*

a. He receives every one, and rejects none. The parables of the prodigal son, the lost sheep, and the lost groat.

b. He is sure to restore him, by healing the wounds of sin, restoring, thus, peace to his heart, and bestowing on him abundant graces.

II. FOR THE JUST.

As the prodigal son, after having obtained forgiveness of his sins, and received new garments, was invited to a splendid banquet, so Jesus invites the reconciled sinner, after the reception of the Sacrament of penance, to Holy Communion. Oh! it is good for the justified sinner to partake of this celestial banquet—

1. *A banquet of great honor.*

You are invited by the King of Glory to receive his sacred body and precious blood. Is it not a great insult to the Son of God to decline his kind invitation?

2. *A banquet of great strength.*

a. Who is not in need of strength, in consequence of his inherited frailty, increased by his actual sins?

b. Jesus strengthens us in Holy Communion, by which we are most intimately united with Him who is the Bread of Life, and the true Vine, of whose vivifying and nourishing strength all the branches partake.

3. *A banquet of great joy.*

a. It is described to us as the Christian Passover, the Manna descending from heaven, the royal wedding. Moreover, it prefigures the union of the Elect with Jesus in heaven.

b. In fact, the necessary dispositions for the reception of the adorable sacrament, the acts of faith, hope and charity, and other acts of devotion, constitute true joy of the heart; still more the partaking of Holy Communion itself; to which the lives of the Saints, as, for instance, the life of St. Philip Neri, bear testimony.

III. FOR THE SUFFERING.

Ye who are afflicted in body and soul, who are looking here and there in vain for a helper, why do you seek so long a time? It is good for you to be with Jesus. Of a helper in time of distress are required:

1. *Compassion.* Where do you find compassion?

a. From the world? The child of the world seeks it there. But the world, which flatters its children in bright days,

deserts them in their time of need, and leaves them to their fate.

b. *From Jesus? Most certainly!* Having been tempted in all things like as we are, he has compassion on our infirmities (Heb. iv, 15). He bade his disciples to weep with those that weep. Jesus and his true disciples will help you.

2. *Power.*

Whilst the world is often powerless to help the suffering in their tribulations, Jesus, who went about doing good, and relieving all human miseries, is able to assist you in your utmost need. His arm is not shortened.

3. *Willingness.* Be not deceived:

a. The world is not willing to help you. The proud man turns away from the suffering; the rich man is not moved by your tears; to the sensual man your misery is the object of disgust. You behold a mirror of the world in the conduct of Dives in regard to Lazarus.

b. Jesus is desirous to help you. "Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." And although he does not take from us all earthly grief for the wisest design, yet he never refuses to console us. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted!"

IV. FOR THE DYING.

1. *Death is frightful to human nature.*

a. Death is the ruin of strength and beauty, preceded by bodily pains.

b. It is the separation from parents, children, and friends, from property and honors. "Only the grave remaineth for me." Job xvii, 1.

c. It is the greatest anguish and struggle of the soul, immediately succeeded by corruption and cadaverous smell. "O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions." Ecclus. xli, 1.

d. Death is the more frightful to the sinner on account of the torments of his conscience and the terrors of judgment. "The death of the wicked is very evil." Ps. xxxiii, 22.

2. *Death is good for us if we die with Jesus.*

a. Jesus consoles us, when all earthly consolation is taken from us. He reminds us of the resurrection, of our reunion with those who are dear to us. By the Sacrament of penance he stills the tempest of the soul; Extreme Unction strengthens us for our last struggle, and the Viaticum is a strong pledge of eternal happiness. Verily, "the souls of the just are in the hand of God; and the torment of death shall not touch them." Wisd. iii, 1.

b. Jesus imparts even joy to our hearts in the midst of the torments of death. If we die in the embrace of Jesus, in his holy grace, death is to us the end of our misery, the passage into the land of salvation, the prelude of transfiguration into unspeakable glory, and the indispensable condition of resurrection. Thus, even in death it is good for us to be with Jesus, for "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Apoc. xiv, 13.

Peroration: Let us then hasten to meet our own Jesus by a sorrowful confession of our sins, and by being united with him in holy Eucharist, the banquet of infinite charity. Let us seek consolation from him in life and death, that we may say in heaven with St. Peter: It is good for us to be here with Jesus.

Hungari.

VI.

RAISE UP YOUR EYES HEAVENWARD.

"Lord, it is good for us to be here." Mt. xvii, 4. The way which Jesus had to travel, led him over the mount Tabor to the mount Calvary, over the mount of glory and delight to the mount of ignominy and sadness. To day it is said of him: "His face did shine as the sun." But he had scarcely left the mount of transfiguration, when he said to his disciples: "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and they shall kill him." Mt. xvii, 21. And we next behold him going his way to Calvary under the burden of his Cross, to sacrifice his

life.—Our way leads us from Calvary to Tabor: we march on the way of the cross to our happy home, heaven. May we in the tribulations of this life, never lose sight of the glorious end of our pilgrimage, and never cease lifting our spiritual eyes heavenward! This would 1, console us in the tribulations of life, and 2, encourage us in the various struggles of life.

PART I.

IF YOU FREQUENTLY REMEMBER HEAVEN, IT WILL BE A GREAT CONSOLATION IN YOUR MANY TRIBULATIONS HERE.

1. *Affliction shall be no more.*

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away." Apoc. xxi, 4. "All evil is banished." St. Augustine. In heaven there is

a. No separation.

Here on earth cruel death separates those who are dear to one another. The friend is obliged to leave his friend, the wife her husband, the parents their children. There, above, the faithful children of God meet in beauty, love, and happiness, never more to be separated. "Death shall be no more."

b. No grief.

Here, below, nearly every day brings a fresh burden of grief, and many a one bears the load of sorrow through life to the grave. In heaven no burdens oppress its happy inhabitants; no griefs disturb their peaceful souls.

c. No pains.

The earth is the house of pains, one large hospital, as St. Augustine says. Life itself is a burden. In heaven there will be no mourning, nor crying. Apoc. xxi, 4.

Therefore, when you stand at the bedside of your dying friends, when corroding cares, or bodily disease grieve your heart, raise up your eyes to heaven, where separation shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow; and you will find abundant consolation.

2. *In heaven we shall find an everlasting reward for our tribulations.*

a. Such is the doctrine of Holy Writ.

"Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." II Cor. iv, 17. "I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii, 18. We are joint-heirs with Christ, "yet so if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." Rom. viii, 17. "In tribulation the hope of glory is contained, nay glory itself, precisely in the same manner, as the fruit is contained in the seed." St. Bernard.

b. The glory of the Saints is represented as the reward of their earthly sufferings. In the Apocalypse the Saints are represented as "standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Apoc. vii, 9. And one of the ancients said: "These are they who are come out of great tribulation." vii, 14. The glory of heaven is accordingly a fruit growing on the tree of the cross. "*No cross, no crown.*"

Therefore lift up your eyes to the glory of the Elect, to the reward that is awaiting you, if you carry your cross after Jesus; and you will find sweet consolation.

PART II.

IF YOU FREQUENTLY REMEMBER HEAVEN, YOU WILL BE ENCOURAGED IN THE VARIOUS STRUGGLES OF LIFE.

1. *Heaven is your peaceful home.*

"They that are faithful in love shall rest in the Lord; for grace and peace is to his elect." Wisd. iii, 9. "In heaven it is not necessary, that reason should combat against bad inclinations; for there God commands man, and the soul commands the body. Therefore the peace of that blessedness, or the blessedness of that peace will be the greatest good of the elect." St. Augustine. In heaven there is

a. No enemy.

Here below we are continually, so to speak, at war. The world, the flesh, and hell, make war against us, causing such arduous struggles that we may well exclaim with St. Paul: "Unhappy man that I am: who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii, 24.

In heaven there is no enemy of ours. Our flesh will be perfectly subject to the spirit.

b. No struggle.

Where not an enemy will be found, there is no struggle. The combat has been fought out once for all, and for all eternity. If you fight the good fight here on earth, the Heavenly Father will receive you into his kingdom of peace.

2. *Heaven is the abode of infinite glory.*

The crown has been prepared for us. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Apoc. ii, 10. It is a crown of infinite splendor and glory. "On earth combat, and in heaven you will be crowned." St. Chrysostom. "The devil is not deprived of the power to trouble us with his snares and allurements, that we may have on opportunity to obtain the heavenly glory." St. Chrysostom.

Peroration: Lift up, then, your eyes to heaven in your many struggles and tribulations. Your reward is exceedingly great. You are a soldier of Jesus Christ, and as such you cannot expect to find rest on this side of the grave. Rest and peace you will find in the eternal kingdom.

Joseph Schuen.

Third Sunday of Lent.

V.

ON HELL.

"The last state of that man becometh worse than the first." Lk. xi, 26. These words are applicable to the sinner. Being a slave in Satan's service, tormented by the sting of his conscience, he is in great danger of dying, at any moment, an evil death. And then? "The last state of that man becometh worse than the first," hell being his house of eternity. Let us follow the advice of St. Chrysostom, to descend into hell spiritually in the time of probation, that when this time is past, we may not be forced, body and soul, to descend into the sea of fire; for which purpose let us consider: 1. How great the pains of hell are, and 2. How great is the danger of going there.

PART I.

THE GREATNESS OF THE PAINS OF HELL.

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." Mt. xxv, 41. Such is the final sentence to be pronounced by the Divine Judge against the reprobate! The pains of hell, in consequence, consist

I. *In the privation of everlasting reward.* A terrible punishment.

1. Terrible in itself. It is the loss of God, in comparison with which the loss of parents, friends, etc., cannot be counted as a loss. It is a loss which involves the privation of all the goods of nature, grace, and glory.

2. Terrible *in regard to intensity of pain* in the condemned. There is nothing left to dissipate his mind, the world with its charms having vanished away. On the contrary, all his recollections tend to increase the acuteness of his sufferings. What anguish when he contrasts the infinite beauty of God with the deformity of the numerous devils around him, the beatitude

of the Blessed with his own torments, their liberty with his own fetters! All those infinite goods, once promised also to him, and which were easy to have been procured, are to him lost—forever. "Know thou, and see, that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God." Jerem. ii, 19. "The wicked shall see, and shall be angry: he shall gnash with his teeth and shall pine away: the desire of the wicked shall perish." Ps. cxi, 10. St. Chrysostom says, that a thousand hells are not so horrible, as to be deprived of the everlasting glory, to be hated by Christ, and to hear from him, "I know you not!"

II. *In the curse of divine wrath.*

1. *Horrible is this curse.* "Who knoweth the power of thy anger?" Ps. lxxxix, 11. "I will pour out my wrath upon them like water." Osee v, 10.

2. *It weighs with infinite weight upon the condemned.* "He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him; and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him. And he put on cursing like a garment; and it went in like water into his entrails, and like oil in his bones." Ps. cviii, 18. There are cursed

a. His *thoughts.* He is no longer capable of conceiving a good or a consoling thought. All things call to his mind his ingratitude, his unpardonable folly.

b. His *desires:* they will never be fulfilled. "The desire of the wicked shall perish." Ps. cxi, 10. Not one petition of Dives was granted.

c. *The utterances of his grief.* His tears and groanings, which are forced from him by anger and despair, are far from being a consolation to him; they will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. viii, 12.

III. *In the fire of the most dreadful divine vengeance.* Who can describe the torments prepared by the wrath of God! The condemned is burning

1. In *fire.* "I am tormented in this flame." Lk. xvi, 24. "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isai. xxxiii, 14. "Fire

and brimstone shall be the portion of their cup." Ps. x, 7; Cf. Apoc. xix, 20.

2. In a fire so *tormenting* that the flame of earthly fire cannot be compared with it. Even the fire of Sodom and Gomorrha is merely a figure. II. Pet. ii, 6. "Whatever men may suffer in this world, is in comparison with the fire, not only slight, but nothing." St. Augustine.

IV. In *everlasting* torments. "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched." Isai. lxvi, 24. "God is and ever will be holy, and as such, an enemy of sin. But since the guilt of sin will remain in the condemned forever, the punishment ought to be everlasting also." St. Augustine. The condemned has no longer hope.

a. He can never obtain grace by his prayer. Dives asks for a drop of water, but receives it not. "Why criest thou for thy affliction? thy sorrow is incurable, for the multitude of thy iniquity, and for thy hardened sins I have done these things to thee." Jerem. xxx, 15.

b. He can never appease the anger of God by his penance, which, being involuntary, is useless. "Between us and you there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither." Lk. xvi, 26.

c. Nor can he ever pay his debts. For him the time is come when no one can work any more.

PART II.

GREATNESS OF THE DANGER OF BEING CAST INTO HELL.

Men in their levity generally undervalue this danger. In fact, however, the danger is exceedingly great, as we are taught

I. *By Holy Scripture:*

1. In *words:*

a. Holy Scripture assures you that "wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there are who enter by it." Mt. vii, 13. That "many are called but few chosen." Mt. xx, 16.

b. It exhorts to "be sober and watch" (I Pet. v, 8), to "work your salvation with fear and trembling." Philip ii, 12. Wherefore all this warning, if the danger of going to hell be not great?

2. *By examples.*

a. The fate of *Dives* teaches you that a man can be cast into hell without doing a great many sins. He was condemned on account of inordinate self-love, as manifested by want of mortification, and for want of charity. "He was condemned, not because he was rich, but because he was merciless." St. Chrysostom. Call to mind the reprobation of the unprofitable servant (Mt. xxv, 30), of the merciless creditor (Mt. xviii, 34), of the foolish virgins (Mt. xxv, 12), and of the curse pronounced upon the figtree.

b. The sad fate of *Judas* should convince you that a man can be rejected, even although he may have performed many good works. "The beginning of Judas is mentioned with praise," says St. Jerome. A lamentable security was the cause of his fall. There are many others who for the same cause suffered shipwreck. "Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works in thy name? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity." Mt. vii, 22. St. Antony, St. Francis Xavier, and many other Saints, feared to be rejected, after they had performed severe penance. And should you not fear?

c. The reprobation of the *rebellious angels* is a proof that we may go to hell, although we have received great graces. "Behold, they that serve him are not steadfast, and in his angels he found wickedness." Job iv, 18. And you, perhaps, never fear because of a false confidence in divine mercy and your own strength. "Let him that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. x, 12.

II. *By observation and experience.*

One mortal sin, not remitted, is the cause of the second

death. And how many mortal sins are committed in consequence of human frailty and levity, the dangers and occasions of sin being so numerous! How rare is true penance! How prone is man to relapse; how soon is sin turned into habit!

Peroration: Great then are the pains of hell, and great is the danger of incurring them. Therefore let us work our salvation with fear and trembling, and under constant prayer to Him who strengtheneth us. "Mindful of the great danger of being lost, pray frequently: Here burn, here cut, but in eternity spare me O Lord." St. Augustine. And bear your sufferings and tribulations with patience.

Segaud.

VI.

CONFESSION RESPONDS TO THE PROFOUNDEST WANTS OF HUMAN NATURE, AND IS THE SOURCE OF MANIFOLD BLESSINGS.

"When he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke." Lk. xi, 14. Lent is a time of penance, when the Church exhorts her children to cast the devil out of their hearts, by making a good confession of their sins. Although this stern duty of confession is an act of mortification to everyone, and even one which appears to some so arduous as to cause their alienation from the Church, yet it is in conformity with the universal instincts of human nature, and is to man, even from a natural point of view, the source of priceless blessings.

I. CONFESSION CORRESPONDS WITH THE WANTS OF HUMAN NATURE.

1. When you are struck with grief and sorrow, it is natural for you to seek some relief by communicating your sorrows to a friend. Is not sin the most excruciating grief and misery of your soul? And when your soul is depressed with the guilt of sin, where will you find a friend to whom you may confide the secret of your troubled soul? Would not your self-accusa-

tion before your father, or mother, or wife, increase your confusion, and perhaps diminish their affection for you? Behold, there is a friend of our Saviour, and on this account a friend of yours, awaiting you in the confessional, sent by Him who said: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Mt. xi, 28. You need not be ashamed to open your sinful heart to him. When he received Holy Orders he obliged himself to hear and console sinners. You need not be afraid of your secret being betrayed: his mouth is closed forever by the sacramental seal. Your Jesus took indeed the tenderest care of you by instituting this sacrament of confession.

2. Man is, moreover, naturally inclined to confess his crime, because of a certain relief it affords to his conscience. Did you never hear of criminals, whose restless consciences forced them to confess their wicked deeds? The stomach agitated with convulsions, in its efforts to free itself of poison, is the natural figure of a heart which is poisoned with sin. The priest in the confessional is the judge, to whom the sinner is invited to confess his guilt. Be not afraid: bound by no family ties, his heart has room enough for every lamb of his flock. He knows our proclivity to sin by his own sad experience. It is his sacred vocation to hear and advise you.

3. Men ascribe, with one accord, a propitiating effect to the confession of guilt. We recognize in the confession of sin an act of contrition and the beginning of penance. A mother demands of her child to confess its fault, and does not hope for amendment without it. God demanded of our first parents to avow their guilt, and rejected Cain because he would not confess his crime. Seneca said: "Do you know why no one confesses his faults? Because he is yet immersed in them. To confess his faults is a sign of amendment." He who hesitates to own himself to be guilty, shows that he is still in the servitude of sin. "David said, Peccavi, and forthwith he heard the word, Thy sin is taken from thee. So great is the efficacy of these three syllables! They are three syllables, but in them the flame of the holocaust tends heavenward in the sight of God." St. Augustine.

It is then true that by demanding the confession of sins, as a condition of availing ourselves of the benefit of his atonement, our Saviour met a natural want of the human heart.

II. CONFESSION IS THE SOURCE OF MANIFOLD BLESSINGS.

Divine wisdom is the more apparent in the institution of confession, if we consider its great blessings.

1. *By confession human pride is crushed.* Pride is the secret cause of every sin. The sinner says to God: I will not serve. Therefore humility, the reverse of pride, must lead the sinner back to God. Without humility conversion is utterly impossible. But to confess your sins, is an act of great humility, extremely difficult to the proud.

2. *Confession promotes self-knowledge*, without which Christian virtue cannot be obtained. Few of us would ever examine their conscience, unless the necessity of confessing their sins obliged them to sweep the house of their soul. Besides, this self-knowledge will be promoted by the queries and warnings of the priest.

3. *By confession the care of souls is rendered efficacious.* Every man needs advice in the affairs of his conscience. Man is a partial judge in his own affairs. If you reveal to the priest the condition of your soul, you enable him to apply the best means for the amendment of your morals and for your progress in virtue.

4. *Peace is poured out into the soul of the Christian.* You know this by your own experience. How many penitents shed tears of true joy, after the confession of their sins! Man wants to hear from God through his minister, that his sins are forgiven.

5. *Confession promotes the welfare of human society.* The confessional has done more to good society, than the best laws can ever do. The necessity of confessing has hindered many sins and crimes. Deadly enemies are reconciled, damage in property and reputation is repaired in consequence of confession. Children and parents are reconciled to their respective duties.

Many a father who ridicules this institution owes it to the confessional, that the honor of his family was protected, his son preserved from disgraceful sin, and his daughter from ignominy.

Peroration: Let us then admire divine wisdom manifested by sacramental confession, and thus show our admiration practically, by making frequent use of this sacrament of mercy.

Joseph Ehrler.

Feast of the Annunciation.

IV.

MARY OUR MODEL AS REGARDS PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." Lk. i, 28. Mary is the blessed among women; of all the daughters of Eve she was chosen to be the Mother of God. We are the blessed among all creatures of God, since we receive in Holy Communion the same Divine Child in our hearts, whom Mary on this day conceived in her virginal womb. It is therefore becoming that we should look up to Mary as our model in preparing ourselves for this infinite grace.

I. MARY CONCEIVED HER SON WITH ANGELIC PURITY.

1. Mary's life was a life of angelic purity, the work of divine grace and her own faithful co-operation. She was conceived without sin, and had never contaminated her soul with the slightest actual sin. This grace was conferred upon her by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Mary co-operated faithfully with divine grace, serving God from her earliest childhood in the temple.

2. Angelic purity should adorn our souls also, when we receive Jesus in the most blessed Sacrament. We should be in the state of grace.

a. For that which we receive is the true body and blood

of the Son of the living God, hidden under the veil of the species of bread. But God is the Holy God, who hates whatever contaminates the human soul.

b. The mystery we receive, is a *virginal flesh*, formed in the womb of the purest Virgin by a miracle of the Holy Ghost; virginal souls, such as Mary, Joseph, John, were permitted to approach this sanctuary of God. It was laid in a new sepulchre; it is touched by the hands of a virginal priesthood. Would you venture to receive this holy body into a sinful heart?

c. This Divine Flesh was sacrificed for our salvation on the Cross; and as often as we eat of this Bread, we are to announce the death of the Lord. Could we eat in sin this divine Flesh, that was sacrificed for our sins?

d. It is a glorified body. It has been freed from all earthly imperfections, and is now present here adorned with the same wonderful qualities as when it ascended into heaven. And would you be rash enough to touch and receive it with a sinful mouth and heart?

Therefore prove yourself, make a sincere and sorrowful confession, and then come and eat of this Bread.

II. MARY RECEIVED JESUS WITH AN ARDENT DESIRE OF HER HEART.

If the Patriarchs and Prophets had with great desire looked forward to the coming of the Saviour, if Simeon and Anna served in the temple night and day by fastings and prayer, waiting for the consolation of Israel; how great must have been the desire to see the Saviour of all mankind in Her who was from all eternity predestinated, not only to carry Him in her arms, but from whose purest blood and maternal substance the Holy of Holies was to take the human flesh?

a. This blessed Sacrament strengthens us against sin. It is, as the Council of Trent says, "an antidote by which we are delivered from daily trespasses and preserved from mortal sins." Sess. xiii, Cap. ii. Who then would not desire for this strengthening bread?

b. By the reception of this Divine Supper all virtues grow in our souls. "He that eateth me, the same shall also live by me." John vi, 58. He who lives by Jesus Christ, will also love what he loves. "By the reception of this sacred Flesh, vice is abhorred, chastity is loved, earthly things are despised, and man transformed into a new man, not by nature, but by grace." St. Lawrence Justiniani.

c. The greatest desire of the human heart is fulfilled: the most intimate union with God. In this Holy Sacrament we obtain by grace what our first parents attempted to obtain in the way of sin. "Behold a great nation: neither is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them, as our God is present to all our petitions." Deut. iv, 6.

d. This celestial bread is a pledge of the glory of our soul and of the resurrection of our body. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption." Ps. xv, 10. "Your fathers did eat manna in the desert; and they died. This is the bread descending down from heaven; that if any one eat of it he may not die." John vi, 49.

How great was the desire of the Saints for this heavenly bread! If we do not return love with love, we have reason to fear that the word of the Saviour will be fulfilled in us: "The queen of the south shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Mt. xii, 42.

III. MARY LISTENED TO THE MESSAGE OF THE ANGEL WITH PROFOUND REVERENCE.

1. She listened to the words of the Angel with virginal reverence and humility, so that he said to her: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God." And when the Angel had explained the grand mystery, she replies with the same reverence: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." And ever since she regarded herself as the sanctuary of God, to which feeling she gave vent in the incomparable *Magnificat*.

2. Let us also pay the profoundest homage and reverence to the Son of God, when under the appearance of bread he enters our hearts.

a. Who is he who comes to visit us? The King of heaven and earth. Sun, moon, and stars praise his majesty. The angelic hosts lie prostrate in adoration before him.—He said the word, and the world was made.—He is conqueror of death and hell.

b. Who are we? Dust and ashes; unprofitable servants; our souls and bodies are contaminated with sin. Our Holy Mother exhorts us with good reason to say at the approach of Jesus the reverential words of the Centurion: "O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof."

Peroration: Let us manifest our reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, especially by preserving the treasure we received, by penance and amendment of life. To the Blessed Virgin the Day of Annunciation was the beginning of a new life: the dignity of Mother of God had imposed on her new and higher duties. Every Communion imposes upon us new duties. St. Augustine remarks: "Let him amend his life, who is to receive the Life." Let us then in this sacred time make a due preparation for the reception of that Blessed Sacrament, by which we are full of grace, the Lord being with us.

Joseph Ehrler.

Fourth Sunday of Lent.

V.

LAETARE.

In this time of penance and spiritual grief the Holy Church, in the Introit of Holy Mass, exhorts us to rejoice and be glad with her. "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you that love her." Isai. lxvi, 10. The world does not understand how penance and joy can be united. The explanation, however, is obvious, if we reflect, to what kind of joys the Church invites us: *not to worldly and deceitful, but, true, joys.*

I. NATURE OF TRUE JOY.

We can have no true joy in aught but that which is truly good. Every other kind of joy is deceitful and fallacious. If you long for true joy, seek it

1. *In God:*

a. Sincerely. Remember the infinite attributes of God, his power, wisdom, bounty, beauty, sanctity, mercy, etc. Raise up your eyes to the choirs of holy angels who, for more than six thousand years, have found their delight in the vision of God, and in the contemplation of his perfections; and who find as intense a joy in this occupation to-day as they did on the first day on which they found themselves embosomed in its ecstasy. Indeed, there is nothing good out of God, and whatever is good is good through him. Consequently, God is the first and ultimate object of our joy and delight.

b. Disinterestedly. As a mother rejoices at the elevation of her son to a high dignity, although she derives no advantage from it, so should we direct our joy in God immediately to God himself. He who loves God, not for the sake of God, but for his own advantage, does not partake of a perfect joy. Such a one has no great desire to see his God praised and honored by all creatures.

2. *In a good conscience*, which is obtained

a. By avoiding sin. Although we combat amidst many tribulations, yet the conviction that we have fought and overcome for the sake of God, is ever the source of pure and perfect joy.

b. In consequence of untiring zeal in performing good works. Whoever finds his joy in Jesus, knows of no greater delight than the consciousness of having striven for resemblance to him, by adorning his soul with Christian virtues. It is for this reason that the Apostle rejoices, saying: "Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity of heart and sincerity of God * * * we have conversed in this world." II Cor. i, 12.

3. *Incessantly.* A transient joy is not perfect. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice." Philip. iv, 4. But in order to be in a condition which admits of our rejoicing always, we must be

a. Perseverant in good works. Lukewarmness, fickleness, performance of devotions by fits and starts, cause pangs of conscience.

b. Cautious as to worldly amusements. Moses absorbed in prayer on the mountain enjoyed true happiness, whilst the joys of the Israelites, who at the same time danced around the golden calf, could not satisfy their hearts.

II. MOTIVES OF TRUE JOY.

It is self-evident, that the greatness and majesty of God should be the first and principal motive. But in the second place, we should rejoice over our own glory and beatitude, because both are emanations from the glory and beatitude of God.

1. *Our glory.* Who would not rejoice in the exceeding great honor conferred on mankind by the human nature having been taken by God himself—an honor which was denied to the angels; and by that nature having been elevated to the throne of God, so that the angels themselves adore our flesh taken by the Son of God? Heb. ii, 9.

2. *Our beatitude.* Who would not rejoice at the thought of the infinite happiness prepared for us? And lest we should shrink from embracing this joy, God guaranteed our future beatitude

a. By his promises, even under oath, through Moses, the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles.

b. By the pledges of Baptism, and the other Sacraments.

c. By the security of his only-begotten Son, whom he gave, "that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but have life everlasting." John iii, 16.

III. WHO ARE ENTITLED TO THIS TRUE JOY?

Many a one desires to possess this delight of the soul who has no claim whatever on it.

1. Only the state of sanctifying grace entitles you to it, the cause of sadness having thus been taken from you. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Ps. xxxi, 1. How bitterly did Magdalene weep on account of her sins! And who can describe her joy when she heard the words: Thy sins are forgiven thee? St. Francis Seraphicus was carried away in ecstasy, when our Lord assured him of the forgiveness of all his sins. Are not the treasures of this joy, the sacraments of the Church, opened to us also? And the more we increase in grace by receiving the holy Sacraments the more sure becomes our title to joy and confidence. "For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Rom. viii, 16.

2. But false, even noxious, joys are the portion of him who (*a*) seeks only earthly joys which are perishable, frequently cause great sadness, and hinder true joy, and (*b*) who only trifles with the affair of his salvation. You may experience a certain pleasure in thinking and conversing about God, religion, and beatitude; but without earnestly endeavoring to do God's holy will, it is not a joy in God, and, accordingly, not a true joy.

Peroration: Thus the exhortation *Laetare* well befits this time of penance. It reminds penitents of the transfiguration brought about by true penance, and calls on slothful and careless Christians to do penance, this being to them the only way to the joys of our Lord.

Geiler of Kaisersperg.

VI.

SACRILEGIOUS COMMUNION.

"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." 1 Cor. xi, 29. This Sunday bears the name *Laetare*, because the Holy Church exhorts us in the *Introit* of Holy Mass to rejoice and to be glad. The principal reason for which we should be glad during this sad time of penance is described in the Gospel, in which the miraculous multiplying of bread is related, a figure of the miraculous bread of angels, which is preserved in every tabernacle—the Holy Eucharist. Rejoice, my dear children, says our Mother, for the time is at hand, when you shall partake of the celestial banquet.—Let us, however, bear in mind, that only those who receive Holy Communion worthily, shall taste the sweetness of this angelic bread; whereas, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself." "*Mors est malis, vita bonis.*" That this most blessed Sacrament may be, and remain to you, the delight and consolation of your hearts, I will remind you of how great and dreadful a crime is sacrilegious Communion. *It is dreadful in itself, and in its consequences.*

I. SACRILEGIOUS COMMUNION IS A DREADFUL CRIME IN ITSELF.

1. It is the most horrible sacrilege. Sacrilege is a profanation of holy things, holy persons, or holy places. It is a tremendous sin, because it is a direct outrage against God. But what is possible to be imagined more holy than the most blessed Sacrament, the living God of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ

himself, with his divine and human nature, with his adorable body and blood? A sin committed against the most blessed Sacrament is, consequently, the most atrocious sacrilege of which a man can be guilty. Whosoever shall eat this bread unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. He forces the Holy of Holies, the Son of the Virgin, to enter under his ignominious roof, to dwell in his contaminated soul.

2. Although every mortal sin is a renewal of the crucifixion of the Lord, as far as it renders the Sacred Passion of the Lord fruitless, yet by the reception of the Holy Eucharist in the state of mortal sin the sufferings of our Lord are renewed in a special manner; because this crime has a striking resemblance to the various crimes committed by those who took an active part in his crucifixion.

a. The Sacred Passion of Jesus commenced with the betrayal by Judas. Whosoever receives the body of the Lord unworthily, is he not also a disciple and friend of Jesus Christ? And he betrays his Master with the sinful kiss of his lips, to deliver him, as far as in him lies, to his enemy, the devil.

b. As the result of that atrocious betrayal, the Lord was fettered, and cast into a prison. Is he not, by unworthy Communion, cast into the filthy prison of a sinful heart?

c. He was reviled and mocked at. Do you not expose him to the revilings and mockeries of Satan, whose abode your heart is?

d. The Jews, by crucifying the Son of God, were instruments in the hands of God to carry out his grand design, the redemption of mankind. The sacrilegious communicant leads Jesus to the cross against His own will.

e. The Jews led the Lamb of God to the slaughter, because they were his enemies; but you are far from avowing that you are his enemy. "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it. But thou a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with me: in the house of God we walked with consent." Ps. liv, 13.

f. Heaven and earth glorified their Creator at the hour of his death. When, by an unworthy Communion, Jesus is crucified anew, it is hell that shouts with joy.

3. The malice of this crime is increased by the circumstances under which it is committed.

a. It is committed publicly, in the house of God, in the sight of angels and of the Christian congregation.

b. It is concealed under the mask of piety and reverence. The sacrilegious sinner kneels down, his hands folded, as if for prayer, and strikes his breast, simulating love and friendship. "He who receives Holy Communion unworthily, is worse than Judas." St. Bernard.

c. The sinner derives his rashness from the very humility and self-debasement of Jesus Christ. If Jesus should appear in his glory and majesty, no one would venture to approach him in sin, as the Israelites feared to hear the Lord speak to them, "for fear they might die." Exod. xx, 19. If we cannot comprehend the mystery of the most blessed Sacrament, how can we comprehend the wickedness of him who receives it unworthily?

II. SACRILEGIOUS COMMUNION IS A DREADFUL CRIME ON ACCOUNT OF ITS CONSEQUENCES.

I do not here intend to speak to you of the everlasting punishment of the sacrilegious communicant, but only of such punishments as are often inflicted upon him even here below, to-wit: sudden death and obduracy. As the cloud, which was once the guide out of Egypt, gave light to the children of Israel, whilst it caused darkness to the Egyptians, the enemies of God, so do blessing and a curse, life and death, spring forth from this most sacred mystery.

1. Sickness and even *sudden death* are frequently caused by unworthy Communion. This punishment is prefigured in Judas, who was the first to commit this atrocious crime, and who after having received the holy food, went out. It is declared by the Fathers of the Church in all centuries, and is clearly spoken of by St. Paul, who wrote to the Corinthians, of those among

them who were guilty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ: "Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep" (the sleep of death). I Cor. xi, 30. Ecclesiastical history records many instances.—The Ark of the New Covenant produces the same effects as the Ark of the Old Covenant, which was a blessing to the Israelites, and a curse and destruction to the infidel Philistines. I Kings v, 11.

2. A more frequent punishment is *spiritual sickness* and death, obduracy being the other lamentable consequence of unworthy Communion. After the morsel, Satan entered into Judas. John viii, 27. He went out to partake in the murder of God, and even after having cast down the price of blood in the temple, his heart remained hardened, because like Cain he cried out in despair: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon." To him who is guilty of sacrilegious Communion, nothing is sacred. Hence the sad experience that such a one heaps sin upon sin, sacrilege upon sacrilege, until he dies in his sins. "He who receives holy Communion unworthily, is in a more lamentable condition than one possessed by the devil." St. Chrysostom.

That so frivolous a sinner is seldom converted, is also clearly intimated by the words of the Apostle: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself." He carries about his own sentence of eternal death.

Peroration: And yet how many approach the Communion table who have not made a full and sincere confession of their sins, or who have not fully repented of them, or whose hearts are filled with enmity against their neighbor, or whose hands are foul with injustice! They eat judgment to themselves. If any one of you be guilty of this sacrilege, I conjure him, for the love of Jesus Christ, to deliver himself of this judgment. You need not despair. The Lord will receive and pardon you, if, like the sons of Jacob, who had sold and betrayed their brother Joseph, you return to him. He whom you have offended, is still Jesus, your brother.

Joseph Ehrler.

Passion Sunday.

V.

CONSEQUENCES OF MORTAL SIN.

The words of our Saviour, "Which of you shall convince me of sin," words in which Jesus represents himself, in the temple, as the stainless Lamb of God, involve a warning addressed to all of us, to hate and shun every sin, especially every mortal sin. "In the world there is but one evil, and that evil is sin." St. Chrysostom. Mortal sin involves:

I. THE LOSS OF SANCTIFYING GRACE.

With sanctifying grace we lose

1. *Divine Sonship*, from which the inheritance of heaven is inseparable. A high dignity and a great treasure. "The grace that God calls man his child, and that man is permitted to call God his father, surpasses all other graces." St. Leo. The Apostle St. Paul prayed for the faithful, that God might enlighten the eyes of their heart, so as to know, "what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Eph. i, 18.

2. *The entire treasure of merits*, the value of which surpasses all earthly treasures.

a. Reason suggests it. We find a great similarity between corporal and spiritual things, and understand without difficulty that as frost destroys the tender flowers, and the blossoms of fruit trees, so the loss of grace destroys our merits.

b. Revelation teaches it in express terms. "If the just man turn himself away from his justice, * * * all his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered." Ezech. xviii, 24. "O truly horrible temerity! If you fast austerely, lead a mortified life, pray incessantly, and perform all these works during twenty or thirty years, but commit only one grievous, or mortal sin, you have lost all your merits at once, as a merchant, who, after having accumulated immense treasures, and happily

escaped the perils of the sea, at the very entrance of the harbor suffers shipwreck and loses everything." St. Basil.

3. *The ability to gain new merits*, whilst the state of sin lasts. Jesus teaches this in the words: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine; so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you the branches * * * without me you can do nothing." John xv, 4.

II. THE LOSS OF OUR SOUL.

Grievous sin is called mortal (deadly) sin, because it causes the death of the soul. "The soul that sinneth, the same shall die." Ezech. xviii, 20. "Sin, when it is completed, begetteth death." James i, 15. "Sin is the death of the immortal soul." St. Basil.

1. It robs the soul on earth *of the life of grace.*

A dead man has no longer the use of his senses:

a. He *sees no longer.* The soul contaminated with sin sees no longer her bad deeds, nor death, nor eternity, nor hell, that is to devour her.

b. He *hears no longer.* The soul of the sinner does not hear the warnings of the preacher, or confessor, nor does she listen to the warnings of conscience or to divine inspirations.

2. It deprives the soul of *life everlasting* in the next world. "The sinner is deprived of the beatitude, for which he has been created, and finds the misery for which he has not been created." St. Augustine.

III. THE LOSS OF GOD.

1. *God with his grace abides in us*, as is manifest

a. From the words of the Apostle: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" I Cor. iii, 16.

b. From the assertion of Jesus Christ: "If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make an abode with him." John xiv, 23. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." John vi, 57.

2. *By mortal sin God is expelled from our heart.*

a. Sin is a repetition of the cry of the wicked: "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," (Job xxi, 14) to which God yields on account of his holiness.

b. It reverses what the Holy Church did to you in holy baptism, saying: "Depart from him, impure spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete." By committing mortal sin, you say: "Depart from me, O Lord, and give place to the devil." Jesus himself uttered this complaint to St. Bridget, saying: "I am as a king, who was driven out of his kingdom; and in my stead the greatest villain was chosen."

"Open thy eyes, O unhappy soul, and behold, what thou hast once been, in the state of grace, and what thou art now, in the state of sin. Thou wast the bride of the Most High, thou wast the temple of the living God, the sister of angels, the heiress of heaven. * * The bride of God has become the friend of the devil; the temple of the Holy Ghost has been changed into a den of thieves, the sister of the angels into a companion of demons." St. Ambrose.

Let it then be our firm resolution, never to commit sin again.

M. Koenigsdorfer.

VI.

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

The time of Lent is especially devoted to penance. In the Gospel of this day our Saviour exhorts his people most forcibly to return to him, their God. In order to arouse this penitent spirit in our hearts, we will meditate on the parable of the *prodigal son*, because, in this parable, the Son of God expressed, in a most touching and striking manner, his sentiments towards the sinner.

I. THE PRODIGAL SON LEAVES HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.

1. *Why did he leave?*

"A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them

said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me." Lk. xv, 11.

"The younger of them." He is yet young and inexperienced.

a. Youth is the time of imaginations. The prodigal son promised to himself a joyful life outside of his father's house. Often have you attempted to persuade yourself that the service of God was an obstacle to your happiness, and have sought to find it in the world!

b. Youth is desirous of sensual pleasures. The prodigal son longed for the joys of the world, for idleness and sensual amusements. He has many followers at all times.

c. Youth desires to be independent, and will not obey. You said to your Father: I will not serve.

2. *How did he leave?*

a. He said to his father: "Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me." This demand was *ungrateful:* the mere name *father* should have reminded him of what he owed to him. It was *unjust*: to whom but to his father does the *substance* belong? It was *foolish*, as it would soon be dissipated.

Poor sinners! make the application to yourselves. Is not God your father both by nature and grace? When you left your heavenly Father for the sake of sin, did you not demand the portion of substance that falleth to you, that is, the power to dispose of yourselves independently of the commandments of God? You did not reflect that you belonged entirely to God.

b. "And not many days after, the younger son gathering all together, went abroad into a far country." If he had stayed at home, there would have been too many objects to disturb him in his joys—the presence of his father and of his friends; the reminiscences of his childhood, etc.

Behold a figure of your going astray! You feared pious Christian practices, such as prayer, the reception of the holy Sacraments, even the society of good Christians, and the sting of your own conscience. "The far-off country is the oblivion of God." St. Augustine.

II. THE PRODIGAL SON IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

1. "Then he wasted his substance by living riotously."

What was it to him that it had been acquired by incessant labor? After a few months, all was lost.—How great are the treasures you have dissipated! the friendship of God, the purity and peace of your soul, and your good works. Like the prodigal son you lived riotously, by yielding to impurity and intemperance.

2. He began to be in want. And he went, and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm, to feed swine.

There came a mighty famine into that country. The prodigal son asks in vain his partners in sin for help. This country is the world—*regio egestatis*—as St. Augustine calls it; the famine is the insatiable desire of our passions; poverty is the condition of the soul that seeks happiness in the world. By losing his God, the sinner loses everything.

"He joined himself to one of the citizens of that country." He who would not perform the daily work in the house of his father, is now obliged to labor as a hired servant. Such is the fate of the sinner, with the only difference, that, instead of one, he has as many masters as passions.

"He would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." The sinner envies the dumb brutes, such as swine and snakes, for their sensual food. Can the degradation of man be greater? "Man when he was in honor did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them." Ps. xlviii, 13.

III. HIS RETURN AND RECEPTION.

A. His return.

1. *The causes.*

a. It was caused by his misery. In his prosperity he did not remember his father. Poverty and want led him back to him. "The famine calls him back whom satiety had led away." St. Chrysostom. God visits him with grace whom he visits with affliction.

b. Forsaken by all the world, *he returned to himself.* The first condition of conversion is knowledge of one's self, and the knowledge of the condition of our soul.

c. *He saw the misery of his condition.* "How many hired servants in my father's house have plenty of bread, and I here perish with hunger?" Poor sinner, the hired servants in your father's house are the pious souls. Compare yourself with them. They enjoy "the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding." Philp. iv, 7. Remember your happiness in the days of your innocence. "Who will grant me, that I might be according to the months past, according to the days in which God kept me?" Job xxix, 2.

2. What does he in order to return?

a. "I will arise." He makes a firm resolution, not deferring his return to a later time, nor being deterred by difficulties. When will that benign moment come for you, which has changed so many sinners into Saints—the moment when you will say: "I will arise?"

b. "*I will go to my father.*" He still remembers the kindness of his father. O, that you would remember the kindness of your Heavenly Father, who is still your father, and who, through his Son, related to you this parable, in order to regain your affections.

c. I will say to him: "*Father, I have sinned.*" He acknowledges the enormity of his sin, saying: "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." He is full of humility. "I am not now worthy to be called thy son." He will confess his sins, and say: "Make me as one of thy hired servants." The confession of our sins is the most indispensable condition of forgiveness. The Easter time exhorts us to it.

B. *His reception.*

1. "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion." God looks on you with merciful eyes, as soon as your heart is struck with sorrow for your sins.

2. "And running to him, he fell upon his neck, and kissed

him." "Instead of punishing the guilty son, he kisses him. Is there here, I demand, a cause of despair?" St. Chrysostom.

3. "Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand." The father replaced the son in his former rights. God restores to you, with his friendship, every thing you had lost; the garment of sanctifying grace, peace of soul, your merits, and the right to heaven. He restores it to you at any moment. "If I will, I can become a friend of God at once." St. Augustine.

4. The father held a banquet in honor of his "son who was dead, and is come to life again." Our Heavenly Father has prepared a great supper—the Holy Eucharist. He invites the holy angels and the just to partake of the father's joy.

Our Jesus has searched for you, the lost sheep, and has carried you back on his own shoulders into the house of his Father. Never may you again leave this house of benediction.

Manrese ou les Exercices spirituels de St. Ignace.

Palm Sunday.

V.

THE TWO BANNERS.

(*According to the Spiritual Exercises by St. Ignatius.*)

As the Disciples entered into terrestrial Jerusalem, following their divine Master, so we are all called upon to follow Jesus Christ, who leads the way to the celestial Jerusalem; whilst, at the same time, Satan calls upon us to follow him along the broad way to his infernal kingdom. We must join one of them—the Son of God or the prince of hell; we must combat under one of two banners: either under the banner of Jesus or under the banner of Satan. All men have enrolled themselves as soldiers in one or other of these armies. Let us make our choice.

I. THE TWO CAPTAINS.

1. *Who are they?* The one is Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God the Father, the delight of holy angels, bearing the banner of the Cross. The other is Satan, a reprobate angel, carrying the flag of the concupiscence of the eyes, and of the flesh, and of the pride of life. I John ii, 16.

2. *What is the motive of their combat?*

a. Jesus is induced by the *love of his Father*, to do whose will he assigns as his food (John iv, 34), whom he will glorify upon the earth (xvii, 4), *and by love towards all men*, through which he has crushed the Serpent's head, "that they may have life and may have it more abundantly." x, 10.

b. Satan is instigated *by hatred of God*, making incessant efforts to deprive him of the honor which men are bound to bestow upon him; and by hatred of men, who are to occupy the abandoned seats of the reprobate angels in heaven, and to judge them. I Cor. vi, 3.

II. THEIR DEMANDS.

1. That which Jesus demands of his adherents, is little in itself, and is contained in these words: "If any man will come

after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Mt. xvi, 24. He demands:

a. That we should *deny ourselves*, i. e., subdue our passions.

b. That we should *take up our cross* i. e., bear patiently all sufferings and afflictions imposed on us by God for our own spiritual welfare.

c. That we should *follow him.* Where is the soldier who would complain of having to bear the same hardships, and to expose himself to the same dangers, as his leader? Besides Jesus assists us with his grace, so that his "yoke is sweet and his burden is light."

2. That which Satan demands of his hirelings, seems to be light and pleasant, but is, in truth, hard and bitter.

a. He demands of them to *indulge freely in their passions.* But he who yields to his passions will soon be enslaved by them. Unhappy is the man who is tyrannized by hatred, over envy, ambition, impurity, intemperance etc.

b. He demands of them to *perform his works*, the works of sin. But is the broad way of the sinner not more covered with thorns, than the path of virtue? "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways." Wisd. v, 7.

III. THEIR PROMISES.

A. That which Jesus presents to us in this warfare upon earth,

1. *Seems to be hard and bitter.* For he does not present to us sensual pleasures, nor honor and reputation before the world, but humiliation, ignominy, and tribulations and persecutions. "All who will live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." II Tim. iii, 12.

2. *But, in reality, it is not so as hard it seems.* For temporal tribulations are

a. Of short duration: they last not longer, than life lasts.

b. They are assuaged by peace of conscience: "A secure mind is like a continual feast." Prov. xv, xv. Jesus consoles and assists us, his consolations being a foretaste of heavenly joys; and his example inflames our zeal.

3. Our transitory hardships and afflictions *will be rewarded* with everlasting joys. "Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven." Mt. v, 11.

B. That which Satan promises to his adherents

1. *Seems to be of great value.* For he promises whatever flatters our senses. He promises to the proud power and reputation; to the impure, satisfaction of his bad desires; to the avaricious, earthly goods.

2. *But in reality it is worthless.*

a. The sinner does not, in general, receive what he desires. Satan makes great promises, but does not keep them. The prodigal son "would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." Lk. xv, 16.

b. And if he receives what he desires, he soon finds himself deceived, as regards the value thereof. For the joys of the sinner are no true joys, since (*a*) they are disturbed by the stings of an evil conscience, and intermingled with pains and tribulations; (*b*) they last but a short time, and lead to eternal perdition. "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell." Job. xxi, 13. Dives.

Peroration: Of such sort is the combat under the two banners! And yet, countless bands follow the infernal tyrant, whilst only few are arrayed under the Cross of the Son of God. Oh! let us this day swear fidelity to His colors; and beholding our leader, and the angels, and all good Christians, combating with us, keep up our courage, that we may once enter by the eternal gates into the heavenly city. Apoc. xxii, 13.

P. A. Scherer.

VI.

THE TWO-FOLD TRIUMPH ON CALVARY.

"Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." Mt. xxi, 29. The same multitudes who exclaimed to-day, Hosanna to the son of David! cried out five days later: "Away with him, away with him; crucify him!" John xix, 15. Let us accompany our Saviour, when he is led out of the same city, into which he was to-day led in solemn triumph, and let us be witnesses of a two-fold triumph on the mount of Calvary, the triumph of hatred, and the triumph of love.

PART I.

THE TRIUMPH OF HATRED.

The first triumph was celebrated by the devil and his associates, the Pharisees and Scribes and the multitude.

I. *This triumph was apparently glorious.*

1. *Against whom did hatred triumph?* Against Him "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for in him were all things created in heaven and on earth." Col. i, 15. Against Him "who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery himself to be equal to God." Philip. ii, 6. Against Him in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally." Col. ii, 9. As such he proved himself by innumerable miracles.

What was it which nailed him to the cross? True, the will of the Father in heaven; yet, instrumentally, the hatred of the Scribes and Pharisees, who prevailed upon Pilate to pronounce the sentence of death.

Such was the triumph of Israel's hatred under the Cross; for they triumphed not over men, but over God himself; over Him who carries the lightning in his hand, and before whom the Seraphim lie prostrate on their faces.

2. *How did hatred triumph?*

As it seemed, entirely and perfectly. Christ is crushed to the ground, and destroyed. Raise up your eyes to the Cross.

Where are his comeliness, his majesty, and power? He is plunged into a sea of bitterness, as no one before him. "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness." Isai. i, 6. "I am a worm and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people." Ps. xxi, 7.

II. *Nevertheless this triumph was the most fatal in its consequences to the victors.*

The punishment of this triumph was

1. *The destruction of Jerusalem.*

Jerusalem had committed horrible crimes against God. Our Saviour was anxious to save the city. From the mount Olivet he addressed to her his last words of peace. "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace." Lk. xix, 42. Jerusalem completed its wickedness by the greatest crime that was ever committed, the murder of God's Son. God avenged this atrocious deed by fulfilling the prophecy: "The days shall come upon thee; and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee around, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee." Lk. xix, 43.

2. *The ruin of many souls.*

The Scribes and Pharisees died in their obduracy, and are buried in hell. They see now whom they pierced, and tremble in the remembrance of their former triumph.

The hatred of Israel is enkindled anew in our days in thousands of men. Not able to take hold of the divine person of Jesus Christ, they attempt to nail his Gospel, his priesthood, his Church, upon the cross. They celebrate many a triumph, by ruining many souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. But they will never prevail. "The desire of the wicked shall perish." Ps. cxi, 10. Their laughter will one day be turned into mourning. He who has overcome the world is the protector of our Church.

PART II.

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE.

Jesus has celebrated his triumph on Calvary also. It was the triumph of love:

I. *Exceedingly admirable.*

The triumph of love consisted in the voluntary death of Jesus Christ. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv, 13.

1. This sacrifice was decreed from all eternity. It was the object of the desire of God's Son throughout all time.

2. It was a voluntary sacrifice. "He was offered because it was his own will." Isai. liii, 7.

3. It was an arduous sacrifice. Jesus calls it a chalice of suffering, Mt. xx, 22; a baptism of blood, Lk. xii, 50.

II. *Blessed in its consequences.*

1. Jesus has delivered us from the greatest misery. We were children of wrath. Eph. ii, 3. "By the offence of one unto all men to condemnation." Rom. v, 18. Jesus Christ has reconciled heaven and earth on the mount of Calvary.

2. Jesus has obtained for us the highest dignity:

a. Divine friendship and sonship. "You are my friends." John xv, 14. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be named, and should be the sons of God." I John iii, 1.

b. Participation of the divine nature. "He hath given us very great and precious promises; that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature." II Pet, i, 4. "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like to him." I John iii, 2.

c. The eternal crown, "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not, reserved in heaven for you." I Pet. i, 4. "To him that shall overcome, I will grant to sit with me in my throne." Apoc. iii, 21. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." II Tim. ii, 12.

Peroration: Let us return the infinite love of our Saviour. "My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth." I John iii, 18. "Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love." John xv, 9. O Jesus, we will love thee in time and in eternity, with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and our whole mind, and our whole strength.

Joseph Schuen.

Easter Sunday.

V.

OUR SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION.

Every Christian soul is to-day filled with joy, because Jesus is risen, and we shall rise with him in glory, if we rise with him spiritually. Let us then enquire, what are the signs of spiritual resurrection.

I. WE ARE RISEN SPIRITUALLY, IF WE CARRY THE SIGNS OF RESURRECTION ABOUT US.

"The Lord is risen indeed." Lk. xxiv, 34. The signs of Jesus' resurrection are:

1. *The stone*, which was rolled back from the door of the sepulchre.

a. The women said to one another: "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great." Mt. xvi, 3. The removal of the stone was to them a sign of the resurrection.

b. When by sincere contrition the stony heart is taken away from us, it is the first sign of the resurrection of our soul. "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh." Ezech. xxxvi, 26. Do you indeed carry about you this sign of resurrection? Was your heart softened by tears of penance during the sacred time of Lent?

2. *The open sepulchre.*

a. The Angel who sat upon the stone said to the women: "Come and see the place where the Lord was laid!" Mt. xxviii, 6. "And going in—into the open sepulchre—they found not the body of the Lord Jesus." Lk. xxiv, 3.

b. Sincere confession, by which the sepulchre of our soul is opened to the priest, is the second sign of our spiritual resurrection. Was it, perhaps, closed through fear and shame, even

in your Easter confession? Remember that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." II Cor. v, 10.

3. *The linen-cloths* lying carefully folded in the sepulchre.

a. The other disciple—John—who out-ran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre, when he stooped down, saw the linen-cloths lying. Also Simon Peter "saw the linen-cloths lying, and the napkin, that had been about his head, not lying with the linen-cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place." John xx, 5. Jesus did not come forth like Lazarus "bound feet and hands with winding-bands, and his face bound about with a napkin" (John xi, 44). He had laid them aside.

b. The old bad habits, the dangerous occasions of sin, our cherished sins, are the linen-cloths, bound about our souls. The deliverance from those bad habits is the third sign of our spiritual resurrection. Become now, from this Easter, patient, meek, sober, chaste; bend your self-will, and the Angel will be able to say of you also: "Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Lk. xxiv, 5.

II. WE ARE RISEN, IF WE MANIFEST THESE SIGNS TO THE WORLD.

As Jesus used every effort to convince his disciples, especially Thomas, of his resurrection, so we should prove to the world the truth of our spiritual resurrection *by deeds*.

1. *We are bound to glorify God.*

a. Jesus has commanded it. "Let your light so shine before men, that they see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Mt. v, 16.

b. The duty of gratitude demands it. Although we often said by our actions, "I will not serve," God has spared, searched and protected us. "The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed; because his commiserations have not failed." Lam. iii, 22.

c. The short duration of our life—the time of grace—exhorts us to make good use of it, that we may gain a happy eternity.

d. The principal manner of glorifying God is the conscientious fulfillment of the duties of our vocation. The flower glorifies God by its sweet scent, the star by its shining brightness, the bird by its song; you must promote his honor by carefully fulfilling the duties of your calling.

2. *We are bound to edify our neighbor.*

a. This duty is imposed upon every Christian, especially upon Superiors. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works." Mt. v, 16. "Provide things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men." Rom. xii, 17. "Let all things be done unto edification." I Cor. xiv, 16. "Be thou an example of the faithful, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity." I Tim. iv, 12. "In all things show thyself an example of good works." Titus ii, 7.

b. It is a special duty to repair the damage caused by scandal given. As sins are not forgiven, unless the stolen goods be restored, so no spiritual resurrection takes place, unless we strive to make amends for the scandal given, by leading now a virtuous life.

3. *We are bound to sanctify ourselves more and more.*

a. By guarding ourselves against relapse into sin, as a convalescent abstains from many things, in order not to relapse into his former disease. Christ dies no more; neither should we, his members, die the death of sin again.

b. By making strenuous efforts to fill with good works the few and short days of our lifetime. "He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still. Behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works." Apoc. xxii, 11.

Peroration: If we are risen to true spiritual life, if we carry the above signs of resurrection about us, this feast is to us a festival of greatest joy. If we are risen spiritually, our body will one day also rise in glory and incorruption.

Aegidius Dietl.

VI.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS BOTH WELL TESTIFIED AND VERY INSTRUCTIVE.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian religion, both with regard to our faith and morals. As for our faith, the resurrection of our Saviour is as well testified as it is possible for any historical fact to be; and as for our morals, it is the strength of our faith, the pillar of our hope, and the death of sin. Let us devote a few moments to these reflections.

PART I.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS EVIDENT.

I. From the testimony of his Apostles and Disciples.

The Apostles and Disciples gave testimony to the resurrection of their Master publicly before Jews and Gentiles, and ever proclaimed this historical fact as the foundation of Christianity, saying with St. Paul: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain." I Cor. xv, 17. The Apostles are trustworthy witnesses, because they were neither deceived, nor would they deceive others.

1. *The Apostles were not deceived.* For Jesus appeared not only to the pious women, and to several disciples separately, but to all of them at once, when Thomas laid his hand in his side. He appeared to all of them frequently, giving them important instructions and commissions, especially the power of forgiving sins, of teaching and baptizing the nations. He made Peter his Vicar on earth. St. Paul records that he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once. I Cor. xv, 6. He who thinks that the Apostles were deceived, imputes its cause to God himself.

Nor were the Apostles credulous—those Apostles to whom the words of the women seemed as an idle tale. Lk. xxiv, 11. How incredulous was Thomas! John xx, 55. Jesus himself upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart:

because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again." Mk. xvi, 14.

2. *The Apostles would not deceive others.*

a. A contrary assumption is incompatible with their character as sincere and upright men.

b. By proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus Christ, they could expect no earthly advantage, but only incessant persecution, of which they received their full share.

c. They confirmed their testimony by their own death.

3. *The Apostles could not deceive.*

They proclaimed aloud the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, in the same city where he died, where his enemies lived, a few weeks after his death, on the day of Pentecost. If the Apostles had told an untruth, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have risen as one man against them to charge them with falsehood. But, instead, several thousand believed in the Crucified on the day of Pentecost, and all the High-Priests ventured to do was to enjoin upon the Apostles to keep silent.

II. *From the testimony of his enemies:*

1. The guards, the Roman soldiers, who "told the Chief-priests all the things that had been done." Mt. xxvii, 11. Their testimony was trustworthy, since what they told was to their own disadvantage.

2. The High-priests and ancients themselves are witnesses. "For they, being assembled together with the ancients, having taken counsel, they gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, that his disciples came by night, and stole him away when we were asleep." Mt. xxviii, 12. If they had not been convinced that what the soldiers told them was true, would they not have prevailed upon Pilate to examine into the case?

3. The lie itself spread by the soldiers is strong testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. How could they bear testimony to what had transpired whilst they were asleep? And was it probable that they should not awake, when the disciples came and rolled the stone back?

4. The High-Priests and ancients who had sealed the sepulchre, rolled a stone to its door, and placed there a guard of soldiers, ought they not to have used every possible effort to find the body if it had been stolen, and would they not have done so, if they really believed it had been, in order to brand the *seducer* whom they remembered to have said: "After three days I will rise again," whereupon Pilate allowed them a guard, "lest the last error were worse than the first."

III. *From the testimony of the Christian world.*

This faith, if it were not well founded, could never have been accepted by the world. Yet a few weeks after our Saviour's death many Jews embraced this faith, and, ever since, the number of its adherents has increased. Millions sealed this faith with their own blood.

Let us then thank our Lord for the irrefragable evidence of his resurrection, and never waver in our faith.

PART II.

THE EFFECTS WHICH THIS TRUTH SHOULD PRODUCE IN OUR SOUL.

1. It should strengthen us in our belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. The resurrection is the strongest proof of his being God. Therefore no honest man could ever resist the Christian doctrine. For "it is impossible for God to lie." Heb. vi, 18.

2. It should strengthen our hope of our own resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, is the pledge and cause of our resurrection. "If the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again." I Cor. xv, 16. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." v, 22. Let this our hope be our consolation in afflictions and tribulations.

3. The bodily resurrection is not possible without a spiritual resurrection during our lifetime. Let us then rise from the death of sin. "For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." Rom. vi, 4.

Peroration: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body so as to obey the truth thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin, but present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead." Rom. vi, 12.

J. E. Zollner.

Low Sunday.

V.

JESUS IN HIS WOUNDS THE KING OF MERCY AND OF JUSTICE.

"Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side." John xx, 27. The hands and feet of our Saviour had been pierced with cruel nails, and his Sacred Heart had been opened with a spear. To-day our Saviour appeared to his disciples, bearing the marks of his wounds in his glorified body. He retained these wounds in his glory, to remind us, that he is the King of mercy as well as the King of justice.

PART I.

THE WOUNDED JESUS IS THE KING OF MERCY.

1. *His wounds announce his mercy.*

a. Jesus has received them for our sakes.

God had cursed the world, when his consubstantial Son offered himself to his Father as sacrifice of propitiation, receiving five deep wounds. "He was wounded for our iniquities." Isai. liii, 5.

The mercy of our Lord was infinite. It is a great work of mercy to pay the debts of your neighbor. Greater was the act of mercy performed by St. Vincent and other Saints, who embraced slavery, to relieve others from that unfortunate condition Jesus has made an infinitely greater sacrifice for us. His wounds are an eloquent memorial of his mercy. "Who shall be able to

declare his mercy?" Ecclus. xviii, 4. "For according to his greatness, so also is his mercy with him." Ecclus. ii, 23.

b. Jesus has retained them for our sakes.

We learn from the Gospel of this day, that the glorified body of our Lord was resplendent with his wounds. "He showed them his hands, and his side." John xx, 20. "Put in thy finger hither." V. 27. Our Saviour retained his wounds, in order that they might intercede for us with his Heavenly Father. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just. And he is the propitiation for our sins." I John ii, 1.

A new work of mercy indeed! The Lord has engraved the names of his sinful brethren in his hands and heart. "How great is the mercy of the Lord, and his forgiveness of them that turn to him!" Ecclus. xvii. 28.

2. *His wounds have obtained the divine mercy.*

a. The world was reconciled through them.

"By his bruises we are healed." Isai liii, 5. "We have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins." Col. i, 14. "You were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." I Pet. i, 18.

b. Every one of us obtains remission through them. The stream of the Sacred Blood in the Holy Sacraments, cleanses our souls, and transforms them into angels of heaven. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." I John i, 7. We receive this ineffable grace in the Sacrament of Penance. A great consolation for us who are so much in need of divine mercy. "For all have sinned, and need the glory of God." Rom. iii, 23. Therefore, however great and numerous your sins may be, trust in the Lord, who is anxious to forgive you. "The Lord is patient and full of mercy, taking away iniquity and wickedness." Numb. xiv, 18.

PART II.

THE WOUNDED JESUS IS THE KING OF JUSTICE.

As such he will appear, when he comes to judge the living and the dead.

1. *His wounds will convince the world of its wickedness.*

a. The Jews.

Israel will behold its crime in these wounds. "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." John xix, 37. "And the land shall mourn: families and families apart." Zach. xii, 12.

b. Christians.

The child of the Church sees his sins in these sacred wounds as in a mirror. Mortal sin appears as the most horrible monster, renewing the sufferings of Christ. "Crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of him." Heb. vi, 6. On that day your sins will appear to you as what they are: your cursing, blaspheming, injustice, enmities, impurities. Now you regard them as excusable frailties; but at the sight of these wounds inflicted by them on the Son of God, you will say with the Psalmist: "I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me." Ps. l, 5.

2. *His wounds will condemn the world because of its wickedness.*

The love of our Saviour for mankind is infinite. The ingratitude of the world is infinite also. But this love, now despised and trampled under foot, will one day be avenged. On the Day of Judgment the Saviour will appear in the clouds, his wounds shining like five suns.

The world beholds engraved in them its sentence of reprobation. The celestial rays of light pouring forth from them will be, to the wicked, as lightning flashes. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Mt. xxv, 41.

Peroration: O poor sinner! are you indeed determined to gaze at these wounds on the Day of Judgment in the state of sin, in which you now are? Will you venture to stand before your wounded Jesus trembling, crushed, and sure of your final perdition? Now, our Saviour extends his hands to you; now, he is desirous to wash your contaminated soul with the precious blood of his sacred wounds. Oh! do not flee from Eternal Charity. Arise, go, and falling on your knees, say: "Father I have

sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not worthy to be called thy son." Lk. xv, 21.

Joseph Schuen.

VI.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS WAS INSTITUTED BY JESUS CHRIST.

Jesus retained the marks of his sacred wounds as a memorial of his Passion and Death. A more vivid and impressive memorial of them is the tremendous Sacrifice, whereby our Saviour renews his sacred Passion. This is the sun and centre of our worship, the glory of the priesthood in the New Covenant, the consolation of the faithful in their many tribulations, and the refuge of sinners. The stupendous mystery of Love involved in this august and holy Sacrifice sufficiently explains why it was, and still is, the favorite object of the fiercest assaults of the infernal Serpent, and of heresy, which is called by the Holy Fathers the head of the Serpent. As it becomes a Christian to be able to give an account of the faith that is within him, I will recall to your mind some of the arguments by which we prove that Jesus Christ has left with us His Body and Blood as a true and real sacrifice.

I take these arguments (1) from the very nature of religion; (2) from Holy Scripture, and Tradition.

I.

1. Let me first remind you of two undeniable facts, which are as old as the world: All nations were in the habit of offering visible gifts to their true or false Deity; and, with predilection, they chose offerings of blood. We find these sacrifices at the very dawn of creation, when mankind was yet, so to say, in its cradle. "Cain offered, of the fruits of the earth, gifts to the Lord. Abel also offered of the firstlings of his flock." Gen. iv, 3. When the waters of the deluge had subsided, "Noe built an altar unto the Lord; and taking of all cattle and fowls

that were clean, offered holocausts upon the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor, and said: I will no more curse the earth for the sake of man." Gen. viii, 20. Abraham when about to leave his country, built an altar to the Lord. Gen. xii, 8. Isaac and Jacob did the same. God himself gave, through Moses, the minutest regulations about the sacrifices to be offered to him. As to pagan nations, history verifies the words of St. Augustine: "There is no nation so rude as not to offer sacrifices to God, or to the gods whom it has set up."

Sacrifices of blood had the preference. In the temple at Jerusalem blood was continually flowing in streams, according to the command of God himself. When the temple of Solomon was dedicated, the king and the children of Israel sacrificed to the Lord two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. III Kings viii, 63. The offering of sacrifices of blood was continued in the temple every day. The Gentiles went so far as to sacrifice to their idols the blood of men, nay, of their own children. (Moloch. The sacrifices of the Mexicans.)

2. The universal usage of making sacrifices to God is an irrefragable argument for their necessity—a necessity imposed on mankind by God himself. By destroying the offerings, men acknowledged God as the supreme Lord of life and death; and by their sacrifices of blood they confessed their own sinfulness, confessing themselves to be worthy of death. Therefore God himself gave the minutest prescriptions to the Jewish people, regarding these sacrifices.

It is improbable that the Christian religion should be without sacrifice, the highest form of divine worship.

II.

That Holy Mass is the Sacrifice instituted by God himself, is manifest

1. From the fact that the existence of a perpetual sacrifice was *prophecied in the Old Testament.*

a. Typically, by the sacrifice of Melchisedech, the king

of Salem, who brought forth bread and wine, for he was the priest of the most high God. Gen. xiv, 18. Of Christ we read: "The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." Ps. cix, 4. Consequently Christ was to offer a sacrifice of bread and wine, not only once, but forever.

b. *In express terms:* "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." Malachias i, 11. The Jewish divines themselves interpreted this prophecy of a sacrifice to be instituted by the Messias, and the Holy Fathers understood by it the Holy Sacrifice of Mass.

2. *From the New Testament.*

a. Jesus has instituted this Holy Sacrifice on the eve of his Sacred Passion. "Whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: This is my body. And taking the chalice, he gave thanks; and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins." Mt. xxvi, 26-28. "Do this for a commemoration of me." Lk. xxii, 19. Here were all the requirements of a true sacrifice: The visible gift, to-wit: the perceptible appearance of bread and wine; the sacrificing Priest; the protestation of the supreme divine dominion; the alteration of the oblation. Besides the Apostles were commissioned to continue this Holy Sacrifice. "Do this for a commemoration of me."

b. The Apostles celebrated this Holy Sacrifice. "We have an altar, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle." Heb. xiii, 10. But where there is an altar, there is a sacrifice. The Apostle warns the faithful (I Cor. x, 14-21), not to eat of the sacrifices of the Gentiles, which are offered to devils. He assigns the reason in these words: "You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils. You

cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils." Now if the Christians had no true and real sacrifice, the words of the Apostle would admit of no sense whatever.

3. *From tradition.* The Fathers of the Church, who guarded with a jealous eye the deposit of faith, the General Councils, the Liturgies of the Church, the Catacombs, and even the old heretics, as the Nestorians and Eutychians, tell us, with one voice, that the sacrifice of the Mass has ever been the centre of the Christian religion, and the acknowledged institution of Jesus Christ.

Peroration: That which is the centre of our religion, ought to be the dearest treasure of our hearts. Let us take an example from the early Christians, who, at the peril of their lives, descended into the Catacombs, to be present at the celebration of this divine mystery. What a difference is there between those devout souls and the Christians of our days! Oh! whenever it is possible, come and assist at the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, that you may be rendered worthy one day to praise in Heaven Him whom to praise and adore in the Holy Sacrifice was your delight on earth.

Segaud.

Second Sunday After Easter.

V.

DUTIES OF THE FLOCK TO THEIR PASTOR.

The Good Shepherd has his representatives on earth, who, in his name, feed his sheep with the word of God and the grace of the holy Sacraments. They are your visible shepherds or pastors. They have grave duties with regard to you, on the faithful discharge of which their eternal salvation principally depends. You have to fulfill duties towards your pastors also, the inculcation of which is at times very wholesome.

1. *The sheep ought to know their pastors and their relation to them.*

They ought to consider

a. How great is the burden and responsibility of the sacerdotal vocation. In recompense for the many cares and anxieties it entails on those commissioned with it, you owe them your thanks and prayers. "Remember your prelates who have spoken to you the word of God." Heb. xiii, 7. "Remember me in your prayers, that I may come to God; for I am in great need of unanimous prayer." St. Ignatius Martyr.

b. How exalted is the sacerdotal dignity! The priest is the minister and vicar of Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and man. The faithful owe him, in consequence, reverence and obedience. "Let the priests who rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor; especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." I Tim. v, 17.

c. That he upon whose shoulders this burden rests is subject to the frailties of human nature, and that he is more persecuted and tempted by the devil than the rest of men. "The law maketh men priests, who have infirmity." Heb. vi, 28. Therefore bear patiently the imperfections of your pastors; and do not be prevented by their failings from honoring them as the vicars of Jesus Christ.

2. *They ought to hear his voice.*

a. They ought to hear the word of God.

Jesus has declared: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that dispiseth you, despiseth me." Lk. x, 16.

Your welfare requires it. "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Mt. iv, 4.

b. They ought to observe the word of God.

"Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls, that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this is not expedient for you." Heb. xiii, 17. "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." Lk. xi, 28.

3. *They ought to support him.*

a. Such is the divine law. God gave to the priesthood of the Old Covenant all the tithes of Israel for a possession. Numb. xviii. Jesus did not abrogate this law. Hence we hear the Apostle says: "Who serveth as a soldier, at any time, at his own charges. Know you not, that they who work in the holy place eat the things that are of the holy place, and they who serve the altar, partake with the altar? So also the Lord ordained that who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." I Cor. ix, 7, 13.

b. Even natural law demands it. The workman is worthy of his hire. But the priest works for you. Besides he is forbidden by ecclesiastical law to engage in worldly business for a livelihood.

Peroration: Perform then conscientiously your duties toward your visible shepherds, that you may one day be admitted into the society of the Good Shepherd.

Menne.

VI.

SIGNS OF ELECTION.

St. Mechthildis said, on Wednesday after Easter, when she

heard the Introit, "Come, ye Blessed of my Father" (Mt. xxv, 34), to her Saviour: "Oh! that I were one of these Blessed!" Whereupon Jesus said to her: "Be assured that thou art one of them, and doubt no longer; for behold, I give thee my heart as a pledge of my love." Ever since, her devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was an ever-burning fire. If we knew also, whether we were of those whom Jesus calls his sheep, we should rejoice as St. Francis of Assisi, who, after being assured of his election, was in rapture for nearly eight days. Although we cannot expect a special revelation concerning our eternal fate, yet there are certain signs by which we may discern with great probability, whether our election is secure. I will remind you of some of these signs, suggested by our Lord himself, when he called his Elect sheep or lambs.

1. *The first sign is the virtue of meekness.*

The lamb is meek, and uses no kind of weapons. Jesus exhorts us: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." Mt. xi, 29. "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you." Mt. v, 44. Jesus calls blessed the meek; and the peace-makers he calls the children of God. Mt. v, 4, 9. St. Bonaventure assures us that there is no better sign of election than meekness.

When Saul learned that David had spared his life, he was filled with such admiration of his meekness, as to exclaim: "Now I know that thou shalt surely be king and have the kingdom of Israel in thy hand." I Kings xxiv, 21. If we possess the meekness of the lamb, we have the eternal kingdom in our hands.

2. *The second sign is the virtue of patience.*

The lamb is led even to the slaughter and opens not its mouth. You discern the heir of heaven from his patience. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth: and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Persevere under chastisement. God offereth himself to you as to sons: for what son is he, whom the father doth not correct? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are made partakers, then are you * *

* not sons." Heb. xii, 6. "In your patience you shall possess your souls." Lk. xxi, 19. "Patience is necessary for you; that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise." Heb. x, 36.

Rejoice therefore in affliction. "The furnace trieth the potter's vessels, and the trial of affliction just men." Ecclus. vxvii, 6. "My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience, and patience hath a perfect work." James i, 2.

3. *The third sign is the virtue of humility.*

The lamb is humble in its appearance.—The Elect are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Mt. v, 3. "He that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." Mt. xxiii, 12.

"Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words: for from it all perdition took its beginning." Tobias iv, 14. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." James iv, 6. Despise not your neighbor.

3. *The fourth sign is liberality in alms-giving.*

The lamb covers man with its wool, and, to use the beautiful language of St. Martin, fulfills the precept of the Gospel: "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none." Lk. iii, 11. The sheep of the Good Shepherd are known by their charitable works. "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day." Ps. xl, 2. "Alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness." Tobias iv, 11. The reason is, because he who gives to the needy, renders God himself his debtor, according to Mt. xxv, 40: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."—God is the more indebted to us if we support his poor churches.

No one can plead poverty. The poorest are enabled to give the best of all alms, the spiritual alms, by saying prayers for their fellow-men, especially for those who are in sin or in darkness.

5. *The fifth sign is the desire for God's word.*

The lamb knows the voice of the shepherd, and delights in hearing it. The word of God is to the Elect the voice of their Good Shepherd, which they hear with attention and delight. "My sheep hear my voice; and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall snatch them out of my hand." John x, 27. "He that is of God, heareth the words of God." John viii, 47. Examples are Mary Magdalen, Lk. x, 39, and above all the Mother of God. Lk. ii, 19. Make your resolutions accordingly, that you may be of the Elect.

6. *The sixth sign is the frequent reception of the Holy Sacraments.*

The lamb longs from time to time for salt, which it eats with avidity, as a preservation against diseases. Those who belong to the flock of Jesus Christ, are known for their desire to receive the holy Sacraments, the salt of the earth. The Sacrament of Penance being the second saving plank after shipwreck, he who does not take hold of it, is doomed to perish in the flood of sin. And as men, if they had eaten of the tree of life in the midst of paradise (Gen. ii, 9), would have lived for ever, so also those who frequently eat of the Bread of life, shall live for ever. John vi, 52. A figure of this strength concealed in Holy Eucharist is the hearth-cake, in the strength of which the prophet Elias walked forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb. III Kings xix, 8.

7. *The seventh sign is fear of sin.*

The lamb trembles and takes to flight at the sight of the wolf and other voracious animals. The Elect fear sin, the wolf ravening for their souls. "Blessed is the man that is always fearful." Prov. xxviii, 14. As the lamb feels not at rest, when it is separated from the flock, so the sheep of Jesus Christ are not at rest, when they were so unhappy as to fall into sin, but always fear, as waves swelling over them, sin, and God's judgment of sin (Job xxxi, 23), and seize the next opportunity to be delivered of their sins.

Peroration: You examined your lives when you made your Easter confession. Blessed are you, if you found in your conduct these signs of election. Whatever may be, now, the condition of our souls, let us henceforth strive for humility, patience, and meekness; let us perform works of charity, listen to the word of God, so that it may fall upon good ground; and let us frequently receive the Holy Sacraments, and shun sin and the occasions leading to it, and these signs of election will afford us a well-founded hope that we are one day to hear the voice of our eternal Judge: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Mt. xxv, 34.

Eber.

Third Sunday After Easter.

V.

THE CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN IN TIME OF SICKNESS.

The day will approach for us also, when we have to leave our dear ones. The usual forerunners of that day are diseases, one of which will be our last one. Although every disease cruciates body and mind, yet, if we bear it according to the will of God, our sorrow will be turned into joy. What then is the will of God, as regards the sickness with which he visits us?

I. WE SHOULD BETAKE OURSELVES TO GOD AS OUR REFUGE AT THEIR VERY COMMENCEMENT.

Are we then to implore God by prayer, alms, and vows, to restore our health? Although we are permitted to do this, yet it is more urgent to be reconciled with God. This reconciliation is very useful:

1. *For the restoration of our health.*

a. Our prayers are more efficacious.

Can we reasonably expect that God should have pity on a

rebel, as long as the rebellious spirit is within him, or that the Saints should intercede in behalf of our bodily afflictions, whilst we are indifferent as to the wounds of our soul?

b. God's intention is sooner accomplished.

Disease is frequently sent by God as a punishment for our sins, and for our conversion. "He that sinneth in the sight of his Maker, shall fall into the hands of the physician." Ecclus. xxxviii, 15. Is it then not reasonable to hope that God will take away the punishment, when his wrath is appeased, and the end of the punishment obtained?

2. *To console our soul.*

a. The sick person is in need of consolation. It is very easy to be of good cheer, when you are in the enjoyment of health. But when misery and affliction are weighing down both soul and body, everyone longs for consolation.

b. The consolation sought for is obtained by reconciliation with God. This reconciliation alone can keep up the courage of the sick person; nay, experience teaches that persons who before were given to alarming despondency, learn to suffer with joyful resignation, when, by the Holy Sacrament, divine peace has been poured out into their hearts.

3. *To secure our salvation.* It is not necessary to recover health; but it is absolutely necessary to die in the grace of God, in order to partake of everlasting happiness. Now make the following reflections:

a. Who knows whether this disease will be your last one? If we are warned to be prepared for death when we are strong and healthy, how much more in times of disease, when our Lord knocks at our door!

b. How dangerous is it to wait for a later time? You may lose the partial, or even the entire, use of your memory and understanding.

II. WE SHOULD PRESERVE OUR PATIENCE THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE PERIOD OF OUR SICKNESS.

The greatest evil that can befall a sick person, is impatience,

since it injures the body, whose suffering it augments, and the soul, whom it deprives of her merits, adding, besides, new guilt. Contemplate

1. *The example of Job*, whose patience was founded on three motives, which he assigns himself:

a. "The hand of the Lord hath touched me." xix, 21. Is it in accordance with the Christian spirit to ascribe your sufferings exclusively to the influence of the weather, of the food you eat, etc., instead of seeing the finger of God? Job said: "The *Lord* hath taken away." "Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God." Ecclus xi, 14. Say, then, with David: "I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because thou hast done it." Ps. xxxviii, 10.

b. "Thou hast sealed up my offences as it were in a bag, but cured my iniquity." Job xiv, 17. Guilt and punishment are connected with sin. Although the former be blotted out, the latter often remains. Besides sickness hinders many sins, and is an aid to perfection. "Power is made perfect in infirmity." II Cor. xii, 8. "The patient man is better than the valiant." Prov. xvi, 32. "Patience hath a perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, deficient in nothing." James i, 4.

c. "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and in the last day I shall rise up out of the earth; and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God." Job xix, 25. Behold the principal motive of patience—the fruit of your sufferings! A little while, and your sorrow shall be changed into joy.

2. *The example of the suffering Jesus.* "By patience let us run to the fight proposed unto us, looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who having joy proposed unto him, underwent the cross, despising the shame." Heb. xii, 1.

a. What did Jesus suffer, and what do I suffer? What are my pains in comparison with his?

b. Who suffered? The innocent suffered, and the guilty refuses to suffer; the God-man was patient, and a worm makes resistance. He suffers for me, and I am unwilling to suffer

either for my own sake, or for his honor. Oh! when prostrate on the sick bed, let us hold the Crucifix in our hands, and make such and similar reflections.

III. WE SHOULD LEAVE TO GOD ENTIRELY THE ISSUE OF OUR SICKNESS.

1. This resignation will deliver the sick person from many disadvantages. For the immoderate fear of death causes

a. Anxiety and disquietude, by which the evil is augmented, and the prospect of recovery diminished.

b. Unwillingness to make the last will and testament, to receive in time the Holy Sacraments, and to exercise those virtues which are the most incumbent on the sick.

2. This resignation will not be found to be difficult, if we reflect on the following truths:

a. We must surely die at some time or other, and it can matter but little whether it be now, or a few years hence.

b. God knows the best whether recovery or death will be salutary to the sick. Are you sure that, in the event of your recovery you will faithfully persevere to the end? Are there not many in hell who would have been saved, if they had not recovered from a sickness wherein they were well prepared for death?

Peroration: If such be our sentiments in time of sickness, it will be an acceptable time, and a day of salvation. If we should recover, our life will be sanctified; but if it should be our last sickness, our death will be sanctified.

Bordoni.

VI.

(Patronage of St. Joseph.)

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY DIVINE IN ITS NATURE AND DESIGN.

True, unspeakable, inner happiness reigned in the house at Nazareth, in that divine family which is the pattern of every

Christian family. Oh! that all those who live in the married state would never be forgetful of the high dignity that God has conferred upon this oldest and most fundamental of institutions! It is truly divine in its nature and its design.

I. DIVINE IN ITS NATURE.

1. *Matrimony* was instituted by God himself in paradise, and was elevated, in the New Covenant, to the dignity of a Sacrament. God, accompanied by two Angels, visited Abraham's family, imparting himself the conjugal blessing. (Gen. xviii, 1). Conjugal love is represented as the figure of God's covenant with Israel. (Osee ii, 19, etc.) Matrimony is the figure of the intimate union between Christ and his Church. (Eph. v, 23, etc.)

2. *The father* is the visible representative of God:

a. As the head of the family, to whom the eyes of his own are directed, whose will they obey.

b. As the supporter of the family, like God himself giving them meat in due season (Ps. cxliv, 14), and even regarding the lives of his beasts (Prov. xii, 10), in imitation of God himself who gives every creature its food.

c. In his labors and cares, since in word and deed, he leads his own to God, keeps up order, removes dangers, punishes, and rewards.

d. This is clearly intimated by those parables, in which the rule of Almighty God is represented under the figure of the head of a family, v. g., the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. (Mt. xx.)

3. *The mother* is the representative of Divine Providence in her family circle. Like Divine Providence

a. She works: "She hath risen in the night." "Her lamp shall not be put out in the night." Prov. xxvi, 15, 18.

b. Her care extends to all things. "She hath put her hand to strong things; and her fingers have taken hold of the spindle." V, 19.

c. She is prepared for the future. "She shall not fear for her house in the cold of snow: for all her domestics are clothed with double garments." V, 21.

d. Her work is performed without noise, in the sanctuary of the family. She is far from coveting praise and honor before the world.

e. She makes many sacrifices, working day and night, watching on the side of the sick-bed, etc.

f. She performs all her duties faithfully, and with perseverance, although her husband be rude and even unfaithful. "She will render him good, and not evil, all the days of her life." Prov. xxxi, 12.—She soon forgets the offences of her children, and every new day the light of her countenance shines mildly and brightly as before.

Such is a truly Christian woman, not by nature, but by the grace of God, and therefore there is something divine about her.

4. *The children* are in relation to their parents, and to one another, a figure of the relation existing between God, and the Angels, or men. God is Charity. Therefore he is Father, not only of his only-begotten Son, but through Him who made us his brethren, also the Father of men, who in consequence are heirs and domestics of God. Eph. ii, 19.

II. DIVINE IN ITS DESIGN.

If the Christian family is divine in its nature, its design is, of necessity, to lead its members to God; or, in other words, its design is mutual sanctification.

1. Mutual sanctification is the duty of husband and wife. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v, 25.

a. Only when a true religious spirit pervades the family, and its members prepare themselves for the vision of God, mutual sanctification is possible. Want of this religious spirit is the cause of the great misery in so many families; especially

where no generous motives, but sheer avarice, or lust, have brought the marriage about.

b. The well-being of nations depends on the sacred reverence for family ties. As the families, so the nations. Therefore, the fear of God, and reverence for one's own self, should be a check on juvenile inclinations; otherwise youth plays with fire, which, once enkindled, may destroy their earthly, and perhaps their eternal, happiness. Parents should seriously reflect before they give their children in marriage, whether the step is likely to promote their sanctification.—The impossibility to obtain this end in mixed marriages is one of the principal motives for which the Church abhors them as detestable unions.

2. Children, in order to obtain this design of the Christian family, should set a good example to one another by meekness, love of peace, kindness, and joyfulness.

3. In families of this description reign peace and harmony, which establish houses, and render our earthly abode the vestibule of heaven. There the suffering members find consolation, the fallen, commiseration.

Peroration: Happy families, where all the members are mindful of the divine nature and design of family life! Verily, to behold a father who is respected as the ruler of his house, a mother who is venerated by her children as a model of domestic virtue, of divine charity, and ardent devotion, and children who obey their parents with a joyful heart, is a glimpse of happiness as near as possible to that of an earthly paradise. "Blessed are they that fear the Lord, that walk in his way. For thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands: blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife as a fruitful vine, on the sides of thy house. Thy children as olive plants, round about thy table." Ps. cxxvii.

J. Sprissler.

Fourth Sunday After Easter.

V.

WHITHER GOEST THOU?

Why is it that none of his disciples asked Jesus: Whither goest thou? St. Cyril answers: "Because sorrows had deprived them of speech." It is more surprising, and less excusable, that we Christians "knowing that, while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord" (II Cor. v, 6), hardly ever put the above question to ourselves. Every one of us could give a treble answer.

I. YOUR BODY IS ON ITS WAY TO THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

1. *What is death?*

a. The robber of all temporal goods. "They have slept their sleep; and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands." Ps. lxxv, 6. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." Job i, 21. "We brought nothing into this world; and certainly we can carry nothing out." I Tim. vi, 7.

b. The inexorable destroyer of life. "We all die; and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth." II Kings xiv, 14. "It is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment." Heb. ix, 27.

2. *In what manner will death approach?*

a. Unforeseen in point of time, of place, of disease, of the state of soul.

b. Why so? "The last day is unknown, that we may be prepared for any day." St. Augustine. Hence the urgent warning of our Lord: *Vigilate.*

3. *How many times will death come to you?* Only once.

a. Death is the gate into eternity, only opened to those who pass into it forever. "Man shall go into the house of his eternity." Eccle. xii, 5.

b. Hence the consequences of death are immutable.

Let us then frequently ask ourselves: "Whither goest thou?" St. John the Almsgiver had his grave dug in his lifetime. The Emperor Charles V had, whilst yet living, the ceremony of his funeral performed.

II. YOUR SOUL IS ON HER WAY TO THE JUDGMENT SEAT.

1. *Jesus Christ will sit in judgment at the gate of eternity.* "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." II Cor. v. 10. Oh that we may not be confounded, when he speaks to us in the gate! Ps. cxxvi, 5. It would be unbearable:

a. Because the Supreme Judge pronounces sentence. It is our last resort. This Judge is omnipotent and omnipresent. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face?" Ps. cxxxviii, 7.

b. The Judge is very severe. He will explore every detail of your life—the use of your time, and of the faculties of your body and soul. "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts." Ecclus. xxiii, 28.

c. He will weigh our good and evil deeds in the scales of justice. Woe to him who should be found wanting, as king Baltassar! Dan. v.

2. *Make your preparation by judging yourself.* "Before judgment examine yourself; and thou shalt find mercy in the sight of God." Ecclus. xviii, 20. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." I Cor. xi, 31. He who is summoned to appear before a court, reflects on what he has to say.

a. Investigate your thoughts, words, and deeds. "The things you say in your hearts, be sorry for them upon your beds." Ps. iv, 5.

b. Make a frequent confession of your sins, that before the tribunal of mercy you may receive pardon for what you are unable to answer before the tribunal of justice.

c. Remember this severe judgment, especially in times of temptation. "What shall I do when God shall arise to judge? And when he shall examine, what shall I answer him?" Job. xxxi, 14. St. Jerome was sanctified by the continual remembrance of the trumpet of judgment. The savage king of the Bulgarians, Bogoris, was by the sight of a picture representing the Last Judgment transformed into a meek Christian king.

III. YOU ARE ON YOUR WAY TO YOUR HOUSE OF ETERNITY.

"Man shall go into the house of his eternity." Eccle. xii, 5.

1. *Into the house of eternity.* The epitaph of a celebrated man was this: "Here is the house of eternity, here I rest, here I shall ever be." You made serious reflections, before you entered upon a state of life. The last step into eternity deserves the more your serious premeditation, since it is of important consequences, and may be made at any time.

2. Your way leads through a dangerous wilderness full of snares, precipices, and robbers. "Dost thou desire to keep the path of ages, which wicked men have trodden, who were taken away before their time, and a flood hath overthrown their foundation?" Job. xxii, 15.

3. Yet you walk this way without caution? "They are a nation without counsel and without wisdom. O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end." Deut. xxxii, 28.

Peroration: We have urgent reasons to put frequently to ourselves the question: "Whither goest thou?" and to make our journey with an earnest mind. "I remembered God, and was delighted, and was exercised. * * I thought upon the days of old; and I had in my mind the eternal years." Ps. lxxvi, 4, 6.

Braun.

VI.
CAUSES OF INFIDELITY.

"And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believed not in me." When Jesus said to his

disciples that the Holy Ghost would convince the world of sin, he meant the sin of infidelity, as clearly follows from the explanatory words: "Of sin: because they believed not in me." The reason, why Jesus mentions expressly the sin of infidelity, is because, as faith is the root and condition of all virtue, so infidelity is destructive of all supernatural virtue. Loss of faith is, in consequence, the greatest misfortune that can befall man. The danger of losing this celestial treasure being great, I will warn you in time, by assigning the principal causes of infidelity.

I. *The first cause is pride, and subtle reasoning on the mysteries of religion.*

1. Nothing is more incompatible with faith than pride. For faith demands that we should submit our reasoning faculty to divine revelation, which submission is impossible without humility. The heresiarchs Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Pelagius, Luther, Calvin, were led by pride into opposition to the Church. Now-a-days a great many apostatize, because they desire to be counted among the *strong-minded* people.

Moreover, pride weakens the efficacy of divine grace, which is as necessary for faith, as light is necessary for the purpose of seeing. "I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the little ones." Mt. xi, 25. The heart of the Scribes and Pharisees was hardened, whilst the humble Apostles embraced faith with joy, and sealed it even with their own blood. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." I Pet.v, 5.

2. Let us also beware of subtle reasoning on the mysteries of religion. "He that is a searcher of majesty, shall be overwhelmed by glory." Prov. xxv, 27. As the light of the sun enlightens the one, and blinds the other who keeps his eyes directed towards the sun, so the truths of religion enlighten him who is humble and modest, and blind him who pretends to explore their depth. Sabellius attempted to comprehend the august mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and not being able to explore its depth, denied it, thus becoming the unhappy father of the heresy of the Sabellians.

It is, however, good and advisable to employ the faculties of our soul in order to learn the motives of our faith, and to refute the objections of our adversaries. But it is wrong to make our consent dependent on our investigations. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." John xx, 29.

II. *Other causes of infidelity are neglect of prayer and of the other religious duties; and a wicked life.*

1. The Sanctuary-lamp will cease burning, unless the oil is regularly replenished. The light of faith is kept up by the oil of prayer, of the Sacraments, and of the word of God. We all need the grace of perseverance, which is obtained by employing the above means. It is established by daily experience that men, as long as they make regular use of them, are steadfast in their faith, whilst lukewarmness is the forerunner of infidelity.

2. Still greater is the peril caused by a wicked life. Christ himself assigns this cause, saying: "Everyone that doeth evil, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved" (John iii, 20), that is, wicked men hate the light of faith, because by it their sins and vices are disclosed in their entire abomination. St. Peter endeavors to impress the same truth upon our mind (II Pet. ii); and St. Paul complains that some rejecting a good conscience, had made shipwreck concerning the faith. I Tim. i, 19.

No wonder that faith is not compatible with a wicked life. The Christian religion demands an incessant combat against our passions: pride, lust, intemperance, wrath, avarice, etc. We cannot be the disciples of Jesus Christ, unless we deny ourselves and carry our cross after him. What wonder is it that those who will not comply with these austere demands, try to persuade themselves that the Christian religion is an imposture, in order to appease thus the stings of their conscience.

History teaches the same. In the sixteenth century, millions apostatized from the Catholic faith, because the new doctrine nourished the passion of pride, since it denied the necessity of submitting to authority. *The justification by faith alone* permitted men to indulge in their passions without restraint. By

abrogating religious vows, it opened an enticing prospect to avarice, etc.—And the freethinkers in our times,—are they models of morality? Their immorality is the very cause of their infidelity. A history of eighteen hundred years does not record the apostasy of one good man from the Catholic faith, much less in the face of death, when passions are silent, whilst many infidels and heretics have been reconciled to the Church, especially when in danger of death.

Let us then not reject a good conscience, that we may not make shipwreck concerning the faith. I Tim. i, 19.

III. *Another cause is reading irreligious books, and intercourse with scoffers at religion.*

1. Noxious literature has destroyed the faith of many. St. Dionysius of Alexandria says, that by the books of Nepos one half of the Oriental Church was infected with the abominable heresy of the Chiliasts. By the writings of apostates infidelity was spread with great rapidity in France in the last century. John Huss was deprived of the true faith by the books of Wicliffe. How great is the number of those who in our days have lost their faith in consequence of reading bad papers!

2. Intercourse with scoffers at religion is another danger for religion. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." Mt. vii, 15. "Bear not the yoke together with unbelievers. For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness?" II Cor. vi, 14.

I avail myself of this opportunity to exhort you again, Christian parents, to send your dear children to our schools. The godless schools are nurseries of infidelity. Hence the school question is the most important and the most agitated question in every Christian country.

Peroration: Beware of pride and obstinacy. Faith is a grace given only to the humble. Combat your passions; they deprive man not only of sanctifying grace, but frequently of the grace of faith also. Never neglect prayer or the reception of the Holy Sacraments. Far be it from you to poison your

minds with reading godless books or papers, or to have familiar intercourse with scoffers at religion, knowing by sad experience that "a little leaven corrupteth the whole mass." Gal. v, 9. Finally, knowing that faith is a grace of God, make frequent acts of faith, and renew often the promise to live and die in the Holy Catholic Church.

J. E. Zollner.

Fifth Sunday After Easter.

V.

THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

"Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full." John xvi, 24. The Gospel of to-day is a part of Christ's discourse after his Last Supper. He exhorts his disciples to fervent prayer. "Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you." John xvi, 23. Since prayer is the indispensable condition of spiritual life, I propose to give you a plain instruction on this universal means of salvation. Faith teaches that it is our duty to pray; that we should pray in the right manner; and that prayer is efficacious.

I. IT IS OUR DUTY TO PRAY.

1. *God demands our prayer.*

Such is the plain teaching of Holy Scripture. "Let nothing hinder thee from praying always." Ecclus. xviii, 22. "Watch ye and pray." Mk. xiii, 33. "He spoke also a parable to them, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint." Lk. xviii, 1. St. Alphonse Liguori remarks that according to the theologians and St. Thomas the prince of them, the words *we ought always to pray* contain a strict precept. "By all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the Spirit." Eph. vi, 18. "Be instant in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving." Col. iv, 2. "Pray without ceasing." I Thess. v, 17. "The end of all approacheth.

Be prudent, therefore, and watch in prayers." I Pet. iv, 7.

2. *Our welfare depends on prayer.*

a. Our temporal welfare.

God is the founder and promoter of our temporal welfare. "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he humbleth, and he exalteth." I Kings ii, 7. Since God does not owe us his blessing, it is our duty to ask him for it. We should especially pray in this present week, as the *Week of Rogation.*

b. Our eternal welfare.

Without prayer the sinner cannot rise from his fall, conversion being a grace of God, which is, as a general rule, obtained only by prayer.

Without prayer the just cannot persevere. Perseverance is a divine grace, which God imparts only to those who pray for it.

II. FAITH TEACHES THE MANNER IN WHICH WE SHOULD PRAY.

We should pray

1. *With devotion.*

"This people draws near me with their mouth, and with their lips glorify me, but their heart is far from me." Isai. xxix, 13. "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord in heaven." Lam. iii, 41. "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth." Col. iii, 2. "God weighs the words by the heart." St. Gregory.

2. *With humility.*

"The prayer of him that humbleth himself, shall pierce the clouds." Ecclus. xxxv, 26. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." James iv, 6. "Only he offers a true prayer, who acknowledges in humility that he is but dust." St. Gregory.

3. *With confidence.*

"All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you." Mk. xi, 24. "Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." Heb. iv, 16.

4. *With perseverance.*

"Let nothing hinder thee from praying always." Ecclus. xviii, 22. "Be instant in prayer." Rom. xii, 12. The woman of Chanaan.

5. *With resignation.*

"O Lord, do with me according to thy will." Tobias iii, 6. "O my Father, if this chalice cannot pass away except I drink it, thy will be done." Mt. xxiv, 42. "Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God." I Pet. v, 6.

III. PRAYER IS EFFICACIOUS.

Faith teaches:

1. *That our petitions will be granted.*

"The Lord hath had regard to the prayer of the humble; and he hath not despised their petition." Ps. ci, 18 "Ask, and it shall be given you." Mt. vii, 7. "And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." Mt. xxi, 22.

2. *Yet under certain conditions:*

a. If what we pray for be salutary to us.

From God come only good things. "Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." James i, 17. Many pray for a stone instead of bread, for a serpent instead of a fish. God in his bounty does not grant such petitions.

b. If we are no enemies of God.

"Behold, the hand of the Lord is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have divided between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he should not hear." Isai. lix, 1. "He that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination." Prov. xxviii, 9.

Let us pray fervently, and in the right manner, and we are sure to be heard.

Joseph Schuen.

VI.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

The Son of God, not contenting himself with exhorting us to prayer, taught us also a certain form of prayer, drawing himself an outline of the petition which we should present to his Heavenly Father. This prayer contains, besides a preface or address, Seven Petitions.

THE PREFACE.

"Our Father, who art in heaven."

1. We are taught to pray, "*Our* Father," because being children of the same Father, we should pray for one another. Such is the will of the God of peace, of the Founder and Teacher of unity. The three young men in the furnace "as with one mouth praised, and glorified, and blessed God." Dan. iii, 51. The Early Christians "were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and his brethren." Act i, 14.

2. By regeneration we are true children of God, and obtain the right to call him our Father. "As many as received him, to them he gave the power to be made the sons of God." John i, 12.

3. We renounced flesh and blood, i. e., no earthly ties should prevent the children of God from his love and service. "Who hath said to his father, and to his mother: I do not know you; and to his brethren: I know you not; and their own children they have not known? These have kept thy word, and observed thy covenant." Deut. xxxiii, 9. "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead." Mt. viii, 22. "And call none your father upon earth, for one is your Father, who is in heaven." Mt. xxiii, 9.

4. Let us show our gratitude by leading the lives of children of God. "Whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify: but they that despise me, shall be despised." I Kings ii, 30. "Know you not, * * * that you are not your own? For

you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body." I Cor. vi, 19.

THE SEVEN PETITIONS.

1. "Hallowed be thy name."

a. We pray for the preservation of sanctity acquired in the Sacrament of Baptism. "But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." I Cor. vi, 11.

b. Every day do we pray for this sanctification, because every day we commit fresh sins.

2. "Thy kingdom come."

a. We pray for the kingdom which God has promised us, that we may one day hear: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Mt. xxv, 34.

b. We pray that we may never forfeit this kingdom, like the Jews. "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. viii, 12.

3. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

a. We pray that we may do the will of God. Jesus teaches us by his example that we should always do the will of the Father. "O my Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Mt. xxvi, 39. "I am come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." John vi, 38.—Our own welfare requires it. "The world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doeth the will of God, abideth forever." I John ii, 17.—The will of God is manifested by the example and words of Jesus Christ, who taught humility, perseverance, peaceableness, etc.

b. We pray that God's will may be done in our body, which was taken from the earth ("on earth"), and in our soul that is from heaven ("in heaven"), and that peace may be restored between the flesh and the spirit, which are contrary one to another.

c. We pray that God's will may be done by those who are yet terrestrial—the infidels—as it is done by the just and saints.

4. "Give us this day our daily bread."

a. Jesus Christ is the bread of our life in Holy Eucharst. We pray that no mortal sin may deprive us of daily Communion. "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread which I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world."

b. We pray also for the daily support of our life. We are, however, reminded by this petition not to be "solicitous for to-morrow: for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Mt. vi, 34.—We are reminded to be content with little. "For we brought nothing into this world; and certainly we can carry nothing out But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content." I Tim. vi, 7. We are reminded of the folly of avarice, and of the peril connected therewith. "For they who would become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition." We are exhorted to trust in Divine Providence. "The Lord will not afflict the soul of the just with famine." Prov. x, 3. "I have been young, and now am old; and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread." Ps. xxxvi, 25. "Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Mt. vi, 32.

5. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

By this petition we are reminded

a. Of the necessity of humility. As we sin daily, we must ask for daily forgiveness of our sins. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I John i, 8.

b. Of divine mercy. "If we confess our sins, he is

faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all iniquity." I John i, 9.

e. Of the duty of reconciliation, as the condition of obtaining forgiveness of our sins. "For with what judgment you have judged, you shall be judged; and with what measure you have measured, it shall be measured to you again." Mt. vii, 2. "When you shall stand to pray, forgive, if you have anything against any man; that your Father also, who is in heaven, forgive you your sins." Mk. xi, 26; Cf. Mt. v, 23; Gen. iv, 4.

f. Of the grievousness of the sin of hatred, which cannot be expiated even by the baptism of blood. "If I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." I Cor. xiii, 3. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself." I John iii, 15.

6. "Lead us not into temptation."

a. Satan cannot tempt us without God's permission.

b. Satan's power is generally in proportion to our sins. "Who hath given Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to robbers? hath not the Lord himself, against whom we have sinned? And they would not walk in his ways; and they have not harkened to his law." Isai. xlii, 24.

c. God gave Satan this power, that we might keep humble. "Watch ye, and pray that you enter not into temptation." Mk. xiv, 38.

7. "But deliver us from evil."

This is the conclusion of our petitions. For if God protects and delivers us from evil, we are truly protected against all the machinations of world and hell.

Plan of St. Cyprian's sermon, delivered A. D. 252.

Ascension Day.

V.

OUR DUTIES TO JESUS IN HEAVEN.

By the propitiating death of Jesus we all are elevated to the dignity of children of God, and brethren of the Son of God. He sends us also the good tidings that he went before us to heaven: "Go to my brethren; and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." John xx, 17. Where Jesus is, there we shall be also, provided we fulfill our duties to Jesus our Guide, our Head, and our Mediator. What are these duties?

I. WE SHOULD FOLLOW OUR GUIDE.

It was predicted that Jesus should be our guide. "He shall go up that shall open the way before them." Mich. ii, 13. "The forerunner Jesus is entered for us within the veil." Heb. vi, 20.

1. We should recognize Jesus as our guide.

a. He shows us the end of our journey, heaven, where our Father dwells, and the only true beatitude awaits us.

b. He shows us the right way, although it is the way of the cross; for from the mount of Olivet, where Jesus had commenced his Sacred Passion, he ascended into heaven. But ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so enter into his glory? The disciple is not greater than his master.

c. He gives us courage to travel the arduous road; pointing out to us the eternal joys awaiting us. All temporal afflictions are infinitely surpassed by the eternal joys:

As to *number*, these joys are the hundred-fold fruit of tribulations. Jesus, who suffered as an outcast of the people, and as a leper, on the mount ascended as *totus Deus*, to use the expression of St. Augustine, to be King and Judge over all nations and for all times to come.

As to *greatness*, the joys are, in proportion to the sufferings,

what a tree is in proportion to the seed from which it sprung. Jesus was seized upon, reviled, sentenced, and put to death. Now he is Lord, God, and Judge of the whole world.

As to *duration*, there is no proportion whatever. Thirty-three irksome years, one day and one night of dreadful suffering, three hours of anguish, and now everlasting joy, repose and triumph.

2. We should follow his footsteps.

a. There is no other way leading to our last end. Let the exaltation of Jesus induce us to follow him on his way of the cross, and an everlasting reward will be ours.

b. Let us also take courage from the example of the Apostles, who, ever after they had seen Jesus ascending into his glory, displayed unexpected fearlessness in professing and following Jesus Christ. "They going forth preached everywhere." Mk. xvi, 20.—They were also glorified here on earth and in heaven.

II. WE SHOULD BE FIRMLY ATTACHED TO OUR HEAD.

"You are the body of Christ." I Cor. xii, 27. Jesus our Head is very solicitous in regard to his members, whom he has destined to partake of his glory. In return, he requires of us, that we be not attached to created things, but to him alone.

Motives are:

1. The ineffable desire of Jesus to become united with men. The desire is greater than the strongest natural inclinations:

a. Greater than the inclination of the soul to be united with the body. For Christ has sacrificed this inclination for the sake of men. When the sacrifice on the Cross was consummated, the holy soul of Jesus descended forthwith into Limbo to the souls of the just, and remained there all the time until the moment of his resurrection, leaving the care of his own body to Holy Angels.

b. Greater than the desire of the body for rest. During the forty days previous to his Ascension, Jesus remained on earth with a body ripe for heaven, appearing in divers places,

and instructing his disciples about the kingdom of heaven. And when he ascends at last, he declares that he ascends, because it is good for men. He is also accompanied by his disciples, although hosts of angels surround him. At last, he will come again to take also the glorified bodies of his brethren into heaven.

2. The example of the Saints of the Old and New Covenant, who had their hearts directed to the expected or ascending Messias. "As the heart panteth after the fountains of water: so my soul panteth after thee, O Lord." Ps. xli, 3. The disciples had to be admonished by angels to think of their earthly abode again. How deficient are we in attachment to our Saviour!

III. WE SHOULD PUT UNLIMITED CONFIDENCE IN OUR MEDIATOR.

"Jesus hath not entered into the holy places made with hands, the patterns of the true, but into heaven itself, that he may appear now in the presence of God for us." Heb. ix, 24. We have strong reason to put great confidence in his intercession.

1. He retained his wounds

a. As living petitions presented to the Father. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just." I John ii, 1.

b. As memorials of his cruel sufferings. A woman does not forget the child born under great labors; "and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands." Isai. xlix, 15. "Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace, that we obtain mercy." Heb. iv, 16.

2. He has proved to us the efficacy of his mediatorship, principally by sending the Holy Ghost, "who is the pledge of our inheritance." Eph. i, 14. Has he not given us all other things together with this Spirit of promise? Let us then never lose hopes for our heavenly reward, through the intercession of Jesus, as David after his anointment never lost his hope for the throne.

"Let us then seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." Col. iii, 1.

Segaud.

VI.

"HE SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."

Jesus ascended into heaven, and ever since sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. These words of the Apostolic Creed occur frequently in Holy Scripture. In Psalm cix, we read: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand." St. Paul says expressly that the Heavenly Father addressed his Son in the above words (Heb. i, 13). And the Evangelist says: "The Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God." Mk. xvi, 19. Jesus himself said to his enemies: "Hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Let us now investigate the sense of these words: "He sitteth at the right hand of God;" and the moral application which they contain.

I. THE SENSE OF THE WORDS.

1. The words: "Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty," do not imply, that Jesus sitteth at the right hand of the Father, as a man sitteth at the right hand of his fellow-man; or after the manner in which we see it represented by pictures of the Blessed Trinity, in which the Son is represented sitting at the right hand of the Father, whilst the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, is soaring above them. For we can only sit at the side of a visible creature. But God is a pure Spirit. Ergo.

The meaning intended to be conveyed in these words is, that the Father has conferred upon his Son in his human nature the greatest honor in his power to bestow; just as we intend to honor our fellow-men by inducing them to sit or walk on our right hand. His human nature is exalted above the Angels and

Archangels. To this nature, because of the hypostatic union, we owe the same adoration as that we owe to the divine nature. "Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." Philip. ii, 9.

2. Neither is the expression "to sit" to be explained in a merely verbal sense. It is intended to signify the undisturbed possession of divine glory. On earth he was subject to the vicissitudes of human life, sensible, now, of consolation and gladness of heart, now, of sadness and sorrow, etc. Ever since he abideth in heaven, his human nature enjoys also the quiet possession of all heavenly goods, and is never subject to experience a change.—Moreover it is signified by this expression, that he is Judge and King. Judges sit on the judgment-seat, when they pronounce sentence. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." II Cor. v, 10. As King he reigns in heaven for all eternity. "God raised him up from the dead, and set him at his right hand in the heavenly places: above all principality and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And he hath put all things under his feet; and hath made him head over all the church." Eph. i, 20.

3. Jesus Christ, as God, is everywhere; as man, he is not everywhere. Else it could not be said of him; "He is risen; he is not here." Mk. xvi, 6. In his human nature is Jesus Christ in heaven and in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. In the latter is Jesus present as long as the appearances of bread and wine exist.

Accordingly, the words, "Sitteth at the right hand of God," mean that Christ, as Man also, is exalted above all created things, and participates in the power and glory of the Divine Majesty.

II. APPLICATION OF THIS DOCTRINE.

1. Let us long to see Jesus and the mansion which he has prepared for us. St. Bernardine of Siena tells us of a pious Christian who visited the sacred places in the Holy Land, and, at last, seeing the footprints which Jesus had left on the spot whence he raised himself up into heaven, lifted up his eyes and hands heavenward, saying: "O Jesus! love of my heart, where wilt thou that I go now? I have visited all the sacred places that thou hast deemed worthy of thy adorable presence: Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Jordan, the desert, Jerusalem, the mount of Calvary and now the place of thy ascension. Whither may I go now but to thee? Grant me then, my life and my all, to follow thee into heaven?" And the days of his pilgrimage were complete, and his soul ascended into heaven. Oh! that we would detach our hearts from earthly things, and seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, and mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth! Col. iii, 1. Let us foster in our hearts an ardent love for Jesus, saying with the apostle: "I have a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." Philip i, 23.

2. Let us not refuse to walk along the same way by which Jesus went before us into heaven, the way of the cross. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Lk. ix, 23. "He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me." Mt. x, 38. He who seeks his paradise on earth, will not find it in heaven. Poor Lazarus was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom; Dives who lived according to the concupiscence of the flesh, was buried in hell.—Jesus has endured ineffable sufferings, but in comparison with the eternity of happiness they lasted but a short while.

"Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works you make sure your vocation and election." II Pet. i, 10. Heaven is a reward for good works. "Every tree, therefore, that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." Mt. iii, 10. Jesus has gained heaven by performing good

works, especially by prayer, mortification, and charity. Every virtue becomes illuminated in his holy life with the light of perfection. Say then your daily prayers regularly and with devotion; come to church, at least on Sundays and Holidays. Exercise Christian mortification, and promote the temporal and eternal welfare of your neighbor.

Peroration: Upon the banks of Babylon's streams the exiled children of Israel sat and wept when they remembered Sion. We are exiles also, far away from our home, the country of our joys. Oh! that we would never feel at home in the land of our exile, but long for Jesus and his glory!

J. E. Zollner.

Sixth Sunday After Easter.

V.

WHO IS THE HOLY GHOST?

As Jesus Christ promises in the Gospel of this day to send the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, I will avail myself of this occasion to recall to your mind the doctrine on the nature and proceeding of the Holy Ghost.

THE HOLY GHOST IS A DISTINCT DIVINE PERSON PROCEEDING FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON.

1. *The Holy Ghost is a distinct Person.*

The Socinians and other heretics deny the Holy Ghost to be a distinct Person, asserting that by the expression *Holy Ghost* only certain effects produced by God are signified. This pernicious error is not in accordance with the doctrine of Holy Scripture.

a. Holy Scripture attributes personal acts to the Holy Ghost, saying, that He will teach all truth, and show things that are to come (John xvi, 13), that He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment (John xvi, 8), that He asks for us with unspeakable groanings (Rom. viii, 26), and that He

imparts diverse graces (I Cor. xii, 2-11). How could these and other personal acts be performed by the Holy Ghost, unless he be a distinct Person?

b. The Holy Ghost is frequently spoken of as a Person distinct from the Father and the Son. "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever." John xiv, 16. Here Jesus says expressly that the Holy Ghost is neither himself nor the Father. "When the Paraclete shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me." John xv, 26. It is evident from these words, that the Holy Ghost is distinct from the Father, from whom he proceeds, and from the Son, of whom he will give testimony, and by whom he is sent. In the form of Baptism a dignity is ascribed to the Holy Ghost alike with that of the Father and the Son. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Ghost appeared as a dove, distinct from the Father, whose voice was heard from heaven, and from the Son, who was baptized.

2. *The Holy Ghost is God.*

a. He is called *God* in express terms. Peter said to Ananias: "Why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost? * * Thou hast not lied to men, but to God." Act. v, 3, 4.

b. To the Holy Ghost are attributed divine perfections: *Omnipresence:* "The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world." Wisd. i, 7. *Omniscience:* "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the profound things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God." I Cor. ii, 10. *Omnipotence* I Cor. xii, 8-11. But no creature has divine perfections.

c. Holy Scripture attributes Divine Works to the Holy Ghost:

The *Creation:* "By the word of the Lord, the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the Spirit of his mouth." Ps. xxxii, 6. "Thou shalt send forth thy Spirit, and they

shall be created; and thou shalt renew the face of the earth." Ps. ciii, 30. The *enlightening of the Prophets:* "And it shall come to pass after this, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy." Joel ii, 28. The *Incarnation.* "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Lk. i, 35. The *Regeneration.* "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii, 5. The *government* of the Church. "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may be with you for ever." John xiv, 16. "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the church of God." Acts xx, 28.

Thus, also, the Catholic Church teaches, and has always taught. As early as in the General Council of Constantinople (A. D. 381), she unanimously condemned the heresy of Macedonius, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and she expressly declared, "That the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, is adored and glorified together with the Father and the Son."

3. *The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one source.*

This doctrine is denied by the Greek schismatics, who assert that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only.

a. It is clearly contained in Holy Scripture. "When he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth. He shall glorify me; because he shall receive of mine, and will declare it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine. Therefore I said, that he shall receive of mine, and will declare it to you." John xvi, 13-15. According to the Holy Fathers, Jesus asserts in these words that the Holy Ghost receives his nature also from Him, giving as the reason, because "all things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine," i. e., the divine nature of the Father is mine also.—Jesus said further, he

would send the Holy Ghost. "When the Paraclete shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, he shall give testimony of me." John xv, 26. A Divine Person cannot be sent but by the Person from whom He receives His divine nature.—The Holy Ghost is called the *Spirit of the Son.* "Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father." Gal. iv, 6. No other reason of this appellation can be assigned, than that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son also.

b. The Holy Ghost proceeds, however, from the Father and the Son, *as from one source.* St. Augustine explains this doctrine in the following manner: "As the Father and the Son are no more than one God, and concerning the Creation are but one Creator and one Lord, so they are as to the Holy Ghost but one source; with regard to Creation the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one source, as they are one Creator and one Lord." The General Councils of Lyons in 1274, and of Florence in 1439, established this doctrine as dogma.

Peroration: If such is the dignity of the Holy Ghost, we have every reason to make a due preparation for his coming. Let us then in the wedding garment of sanctifying grace meet our Consolator and Intercessor, our Light and Teacher, the sweet Host of our souls.

J. E. Zollner.

VI.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

The Paraclete has been promised, not only to the Apostles, but to all the children of the Church. The Holy Ghost is imparted in his plenitude by the Sacrament of Confirmation, which is denied by Protestants and little regarded by a vast number of Catholics. I will speak to you to-day on this Holy Sacrament, furnishing you with the evidences of its being a sacrament, and explaining to you the effects which it produces.

I. CONFIRMATION IS A SACRAMENT.

1. No one who is familiar with the history of the Early Church can deny, that the bishops travelled from place to place in order to lay their hands on those who had been baptized, and to bring down upon them the Holy Ghost. The earliest Fathers designate this Sacrament by various names; as Confirmation (i. e., strengthening), Imposition of hands, Sealing, Unction, Chrism, Mystery of the Holy Ghost. Yet it is not necessary to dwell on this argument, since Holy Scripture reveals to us this Holy Sacrament in the clearest and most unambiguous terms.

2. We read (Acts viii, 14-17) that the Apostles imparted the Holy Ghost by prayer and imposition of hands. "When the Apostles who were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for He was not as yet come upon any of them, but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Of some Christians at Ephesus we read: "They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." Acts xix, 5. St. Paul (Heb. vi, 1, 2) includes the doctrine of the "*Imposition of hands*" among the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, saying, "Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to things more perfect, not laying again the foundation of penance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of imposition of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Cf. II Cor. i, 21, 22.

In all these texts mention is made of a visible sign (Imposition of hands) which confers grace (the Holy Ghost). Now a visible sign which necessarily confers grace is a Sacrament. This Sacrament is clearly distinguished from Baptism; and it is conferred only by the Apostles, not by those who had a right to baptize. This Sacrament can, in consequence, be no other than Confirmation.

II. THE EFFECTS OF CONFIRMATION.

1. Confirmation increases sanctifying grace in our soul.

Every Sacrament either confers or increases sanctifying grace, thus uniting us most intimately with Jesus Christ the Vine, and elevating our soul to the highest resemblance to God.

2. It gives us the Holy Ghost, to enable us to fight against evil and to grow in virtue. In Baptism faith is imparted to our soul; in Confirmation we receive grace to preserve the supernatural virtue. By Baptism we are made Christians; by Confirmation we receive strength to fulfill our duties as Christians. And in order that we may grow in virtue, the Holy Ghost pours out in our souls the seven-fold stream of his gifts. (The author explains the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost.)

3. It imprints on us, as soldiers of Christ, a spiritual mark which can never be effaced. It is a badge by which we profess that we combat under the banner of Jesus Christ. It will increase our glory in heaven, or our shame in hell.

Peroration: Let us renew the grace that is within us, frequently invoking the Holy Ghost to strengthen us in our faith, and in the performance of good works.

Joseph Ehrler.

Whitsunday.

V.

WHO IS THE HOLY GHOST?

It s a bold undertaking to inquire who is the Holy Ghost: at the same time it is the worthiest and most edifying subject of our meditation. Therefore let us not shrink from answering the question, Who is the Holy Ghost? but let us endeavor to supply an answer in profound humility.

I. WHO IS THE HOLY GHOST IN THE MYSTERY OF THE BLESSED TRINITY?

We believe that the Holy Ghost is true God, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. In this mystery of the Blessed Trinity the Holy Ghost is

1. The Person who proceeds from the Father and the Son. This has ever been the doctrine of the Church. An explanation is given in the Athanasian Creed, according to which the Holy Ghost is "*not made*," i. e., he is not the work of the Father and the Son, in a similar manner as the artist makes a statue out of something that is already in existence. "*Not created*," i. e., made out of nothing. If so, he were a creature, not the Creator of all things. "*Not begotten*" of the Father and the Son, that is, he has not received his divine nature in the same manner, as the Son received it from the Father from all eternity. "*But proceeding*," that is, he received his being from the Father and the Son, so that, if there were no First and Second Person in the Holy Trinity, there could be no Third Person either.

2. The Person in whom the Father and the Son love each other. "The Spirit is He in whom the Son is loved by the Father, and loves his Father." St. Augustine. "The Holy Ghost is the indivisible charity (individuus amor) of the Father and the Son." St. Bernard.—The name "Love" is imparted to the Holy Ghost as a distinct name, because he proceeds, as a distinct person, by the mutual love of the Father and the Son;

for, with regard to their essence, each Divine Person is entitled to the name "Love." As that which the tree produces by blooming is called bloom, so is He who is the product of the love of the Father and the Son called Love.

3. The person who is sent by the Father and the Son. This is a doctrine of faith. "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things." John xiv, 26. "When the Paraclete shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, he shall give testimony of me." John xv, 26.—This sending of the Holy Ghost is, however, not a sending by *command*, as the master sends his servant, nor by *advice*, as the Parliament sends the king into the camp of the army, nor a *local* sending, Divine Persons being omnipresent; but it is a sending of *origin*, that is, nothing else but a new activity of the Third Divine Person, who, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is said to be sent by the Father and the Son. Thus we say that the Holy Ghost, when he commenced a new activity in the visible forms of storm and fire, or when he invisibly sanctifies the soul of the Christian, is sent by the Father and the Son.

II. IN THE BOSOM OF THE HOLY CHURCH.

The Holy Church is called a mystical body, a ship, and a kingdom.

1. As Jesus Christ is the head of this mystical body ("He hath made him head over all the church." Eph. i, 22), so the Holy Ghost is *the soul of this body.* "What the soul is to the body of man, the Holy Ghost is to the body of Christ, which is the Church." St. Augustine. That is, as the soul imparts to man life, strength and understanding; so the Holy Ghost imparts life to the Church by sanctifying grace, strengthens her against the world, and hell, and enlightens her by teaching her all things.

2. The Holy Ghost is the *helmsman of this miraculous ship.* This world is a sea continually agitated by tempests, and the Church a ship shaken by the waves of persecution, of heresies, and of tumultuous vices. But even the powers of hell are

not able to sink this vessel. "The Church is a ship that cannot be wrecked, for the Holy Ghost guards it." St. Ambrose. "Behold, he shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel." Psalm cxx, 4.

3. The Holy Ghost is *the king of this kingdom*, which surpasses all kingdoms in *extent*, since it comprises all lands and nations; in *duration*, since it has existed more than eighteen centuries, and will exist to the consummation of the world, and in *growth*, since it grew with miraculous speed, not by the power of arms, but by sufferings and martyrdom.

That the Holy Ghost is the king of this realm is acknowledged by the faithful, who implore the Holy Ghost for assistance and grace, and by the councils which assemble, and issue laws in the name of the Holy Ghost. The first council held at Jerusalem expressed this truth in the words: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Act. xv, 28.

III. IN THE SOUL OF THE JUST.

"The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." I Cor. iii, 16. He is to every one of us what he was to the Apostles, to-wit:

1. A *tongue* instructing our understanding in all things necessary for salvation, either from the pulpit and in the confessional, or by our own conscience; whilst the spirit of the world, the spirit of the flesh, and the spirit of the devil lead us into error. "*Intellectum illuminat.*"

2. A *fire* inflaming our hearts. "*Affectum inflammat.*" The Holy Ghost inflames our hearts with zeal, so as to enable us to despise all things, honor, riches, etc., for the sake of God, and to live, suffer, and die only for God.

3. *An invisible impulse* urging us to the performance of good works. Not as if we did not perform the good works, for "the just are carried along by the Spirit of God, that they ma act, and not that they may not act." St. Augustine. Samson displayed a great strength, when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, but not without his own co-operation. We gain strength, also, by the Spirit of God, if we perform works of humility, patience, and mortification.

Peroration: It avails nothing to know the divine mysteries, to know the Holy Ghost, if we do no receive him into our hearts. Let us then, with the Apostles, prepare ourselves for his coming by ardent prayer.

Laselve.

VI.

THE EFFECTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHURCH AND IN OUR SOUL.

The Holy Ghost came down upon the Holy Church assembled in Jerusalem, to teach, sanctify, and govern her; and upon every individual soul, to enlighten, console, strengthen, and sanctify her. The Holy Ghost has ever since continued, and will ever continue, this two-fold mission.

I. THE MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST RELATIVE TO THE CHURCH.

1. *The Holy Ghost teaches the Church.*

The Church has been commissioned to teach all nations. Mt. xxviii, 19. Consequently the Church is infallible in her teaching; for if she were not, the nations would be under no obligation of believing her. For this purpose the Holy Ghost abides in her. "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things." John xiv, 26.—Let us then faithfully adhere to the doctrine of the Church: it is not the word of man, it is the word of God.

2. *The Holy Ghost sanctifies the Church.*

The merits of Jesus Christ are as a fountain of living water of which the children of the Church cannot partake except by divine help, or grace. This grace is imparted to us by the Holy Ghost, who enkindles in our souls the desire for sanctity, assists us in complying with all the conditions required, and at last confers on us the sanctifying grace. "You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." I Cor. vi, 11. We are sanctified by the Holy Sacraments, especially by Baptism, by

which Sacrament man is born again of water and the Holy Ghost (John iii, 5); and by the Sacrament of Penance, in which sins are forgiven by virtue of the Holy Ghost. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." John xx, 22. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, by which we receive the fullness of the grace of the Holy Ghost, we are strengthened against the attacks of our enemies.

We should, therefore, be very thankful for our vocation to the Holy Catholic Church, outside of whose visible pale there are no sacraments administered, except baptism.

3. *The Holy Ghost directs and governs the Church.*

a. He confers upon bishops and priests their power. "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the church of God." Act xx, 28. "If it were not for the Holy Ghost, there would be no shepherds and teachers in the Church." St. Chrysostom.

b. The Holy Ghost governs the Church by the pastors as his instruments, as kings govern their kingdoms by their officers; so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against her. During more than eighteen centuries has the church stood immovable in the midst of the most atrocious persecutions. Although she has had many and grievous losses to deplore, yet she has always put forth new branches, like a tree which is planted near the running waters.

II. THE MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST RELATIVE TO THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL.

All graces are conferred on us by the Holy Ghost. "No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost." I Cor. xii, 3. We owe him especially the following graces:

1. The Holy Ghost enlightens us, that we may know what is true, good, and salutary. We witness this effect in the Apostles. Although our Saviour had been teaching them for three years, they remained "foolish and slow of heart to believe." Lk. xxiv, 25. When the Holy Ghost came down upon them, he taught them all truth. Illiterate fishermen, who had never be-

fore spoken publicly, announce and defend the religion of the Crucified before princes and learned men, and before nations of every tongue.

The Holy Ghost enlightens us also. We cannot believe as God requires of us unless by the divine grace. He enlightens also our understanding, that we may know ourselves, especially when we are about to make our confession.

2. The Holy Ghost consoles us in all tribulations of life. When Jesus was about to leave the world, he consoled his disciples, saying: "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." John xiv, 27. Indeed after the day of Pentecost the Apostles were ever full of joy in all their tribulations. When imprisoned, they said: "We ought to obey God rather than men." Act. v, 29. And when scourged, "they went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." Act. v, 41.

The Holy Ghost pours out sweet consolation into the hearts of those who lead a pious life. Think of St. Lidwina of Shiedam, of St. Catherine of Siena, who were cheerful in their excruciating sufferings; of St. Antony, Patriarch of the Monks, who often knelt in prayer from sunset to sunrise, and found so much consolation in it as to complain of the sun's rising so early. We read of so many martyrs who, in the midst of their torments, praised God, manifesting a great inward joy. "We must not wonder at this," says St. Augustine, "for the Holy Ghost was in them."

The same Holy Spirit will console us also, if we struggle to preserve our hearts pure and undefiled by sin and willful inordinate inclinations; and to love God with our whole heart.

3. The Holy Ghost strengthens us, according to the promise of Jesus Christ: "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." Act i, 8. The Apostles who were so struck with fear of the Jews, as to conceal themselves; who had forsaken their Divine Master at the hour of probation, display an unbounded courage after the coming of the Holy Ghost. Peter preached publicly: "Let all the house of Israel know

most assuredly, that God hath made him Lord and Christ, this same Jesus, whom you have crucified." Act ii, 36. All the Apostles commenced, now, their missionary labors, saying with one of them: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or distress? or famine, or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? As it is written: For thy sake we are put to death, all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Rom. viii, 35.

The Holy Ghost strengthens us also in our warfare against our many enemies. Without his assistance we are not able to conceive a salutary thought. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." Philip. iv, 13.

4. The Holy Ghost sanctifies our souls. Before his coming were the Apostles subject to many imperfections and frailties. They were not meek of spirit (Lk. ix, 52-56); they were ambitious, everyone being desirous of the first position in the kingdom of their Master. Peter went so far as to deny his Lord.— But after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost they are conspicuous by their humility, meekness, and charity: they are at once men of heroic virtue, and of extraordinary sanctity.

The Holy Ghost imparts to us also sanctifying grace, and, with it, the three theological virtues, and all the moral virtues, nay *Himself*. "The charity of God is poured out into our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." Rom. v, 5. "Know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God?" I Cor. vi, 19.

Peroration: Let us then avoid mortal sin, by which the Holy Ghost is driven out of our hearts. "For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will withdraw himself from thoughts that are without understanding; and he shall not abide when iniquity cometh in." Wisd. i, 5. Let us direct fervent prayers to him that he may enlighten and strengthen us all the days of our life.

J. E. Zollner.

Trinity Sunday.

V.

THE TEACHER OF OUR FAITH.

The command of our Lord: "Go ye and teach all nations," involves the necessity of faith on the part of the nations (Cf. John iii, 18. Heb. xi, 6). Faith, in general, is the assent of the intellect upon the authority of another. Consequently, as far as its object is concerned, we must learn our faith from another; i. e., we must have a teacher. So far Catholics and Protestants agree. But when the question is asked—who is this teacher, the Protestants tell us, that it is the Bible interpreted by each one's own private judgment, whereas we Catholics maintain, that this teacher is the Church. A great difference of opinion on a vital question!

Yet as all men are destined for eternal salvation, it cannot be impossible or even difficult to find the teacher of our faith. Protestants and Catholics agree upon the following characteristic marks of the Teacher of Faith: 1, He must come from God, i. e., he must be established in his office by Jesus Christ himself. 2, He must be within the reach of all, morally speaking. 3, His language must be understood by all. 4, He must be infallible. Having these characteristics before us, we shall now be able to find out the teacher.

I. IS IT THE BIBLE INTERPRETED BY PRIVATE JUDGMENT?

It is not, because

1. The teacher established by Jesus Christ to teach man the ways of salvation, must have existed in His time. *But the Bible did not exist in the days of Christ.*

a. The Gospel according to St. Matthew was not written until about forty years after Christ; that of St. Mark about forty-three years; St. Luke about fifty-seven years; St. John about ninety-eight; the Acts of the Apostles, ninety-six; the Epistle to the Romans, fifty-seven; Hebrews, sixty-two; and

the Apocalypse, by St. John, about ninety-seven years, after the birth of Christ.

Consequently, the New Testament, as we have now, did not exist in the days of Christ.

b. The New Testament, as we have it the present day, did not exist until the year 397 after Christ. The different parts were scattered amongst the different Churches, until the third Council of Carthage, assembled in the year 397, decided which parts should be looked upon as the canonical, and which as the apocryphal books. This council did not receive the solemn approbation of the whole universal Church till A. D. 692.

c. If the Bible be our only teacher of faith, *why did Almighty God give other teachers*? Philip was sent by God to a man of Ethiopia, to explain to him the Scriptures. Act. viii. God sent an angel to the centurion who told him to send for Peter. The Lord said to Saul: "Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." Acts ix, 7. God said to the Apostles: "Go and teach all nations."

Let me give at once an answer to two charges often brought against us. Our Protestant friends tell us: "Ye Catholics, have no respect for the Bible." I answer: The Bible is to us Catholics what the Constitution of the United States is to the citizens of this Republic. The laws of the various States must be in conformity with this Constitution. In a like manner the teachings of the Catholic Church must be in conformity with the Bible. But no good citizen will say that every man, woman and child, should have a copy of the Constitution of the United States, and act by it as it may suit his or her private judgment. In a very short time this government would be shaken to the very foundation. Make the application to the Bible.

We often hear it asserted that Christ commands us to read the Bible, when he says: "Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have everlasting life." John v, 39. I reply: (1) If this is a command, it is, strictly speaking, given to those Jews alone whom Jesus addressed. (2) The Greek as well as the Latin texts justify the translation. You search (Indicative

Mood), as well as the other, Search (Imperative Mood). (3) But suppose the words were interpreted to mean a command, even then it would not necessarily follow that it must be the only rule of faith. Catholic bishops and priests are obliged under pain of mortal sin to read the Bible every day. Yet no one draws the inference that bishops and priests regard the Bible the only rule of faith.

2. *The Bible does not come within the reach of all.*

a. It did not before the year 397, as stated above.

b. Nor from 397 till the art of printing was invented. During this period there were very few copies of the Bible, comparatively speaking, and those that did exist, cost so much that none but the richest could buy one. A single copy would cost from one thousand to three thousand dollars.

c. Even at the present day, things are very little better. For statistics show that of the whole population of the earth nine out of ten cannot read.

3. *The Bible is not understood by all*, nay it is very difficult to understand for the people.

a. Holy Scripture itself asserts it. "Our most dear Brother Paul hath written to you, as also in all his epistles, in which are many things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do all the other Scriptures, to their own perdition." II Pet. iii, 16.

b. Experience bears testimony. All Protestant denominations claim the Bible as source of their doctrine, from which it clearly follows that it is an obscure book. For when a book is easily understood, all will understand it alike.

4. *The Bible, as understood by Protestants, is not infallible.*

a. If the individual has nothing but his own private judgment to guide him, he will never be able to know beyond all doubt that he has the true Word of God. For to rely upon his own private judgment, and nothing else, the individual must dismiss every other authority: he must examine the translation before him, nay even the first manuscripts which were written by

the Apostles or by their order. He must assure himself that these manuscripts are really genuine and not apocryphal or false. Now, I hold that there is no man living who is competent to undertake such a task with the least hope of success. But if you do not know whether you have the true Word of God or not, you cannot take it for your infallible guide.

b. Again, that institution cannot be man's infallible guide, which, if used consistently, leads thousands into infidelity. Now the average reader of the Bible will often strike upon what he supposes to be contradictions, which, left to himself, he is not able to clear up. He therefore drops the Bible as being the fabrication of fruitful imaginations, and becomes an infidel.

c. Further, that which is full of mistakes cannot be an infallible guide. Now, Protestants themselves complain that there are thousands of mistakes in their translations of the Bible.

II. IS THE CHURCH THE TEACHER OF OUR FAITH?

She is, because she has the four distinctive characteristics of a divine teacher.

1. *The Catholic Church is established by Almighty God.* No one who is conversant with Holy Scripture, can deny that Jesus Christ has established a Church. "Upon this rock I will build my Church." This Church is the one which is known as the Catholic Church. For if the Son of God be not the founder of the Catholic Church, then she must have been founded by some one else. By whom? No one can answer this question, although we know the founders of every religious denomination. Consequently, the Church spread all over the world, which was known through all centuries, must be the Church established by Jesus Christ.

She has been established to teach. Holy Scripture teaches this clearly. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and others some evangelists, and others some pastors and doctors, for the work of the ministry, that henceforth we may be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning and craftiness by

which they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. iv, 11, 14. Consequently the ministers of the Church are commissioned to teach. Jesus himself commissioned the Apostles (Mt. xxviii, 18-20): "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And again, he commands us to hear the pastors of his Church. Mt. x, 14-15. Again, he says (Lk. x, 16): "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me." And in another place he says, "he that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican."

2. *The Catholic Church falls within the reach of all, morally speaking.* If she does not, then there is no institution on earth which does. But Holy Scripture teaches clearly that the Church of Christ must come within the reach of all. The prophet Daniel says: "In the days of those kingdoms, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be delivered up to another people; and it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever." Jesus said to the Apostles: "You shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost ends of the earth." Cf. Col. i, 3-6. The Church will have this universality to the end. "I will be with you all days, and even to the consummation of the world." "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Go where you will—wherever you find Christians, there also you will find Catholics.

3. *The Church speaks a language which is understood by all.* To prove it, we have only to see whether the different nations and tribes of the earth all understood her in the same way. Now, the Italian and the German, the Spaniard and the Englishman, the French and the Irish, the Portuguese and Swede, the poor degraded African negro and the brave American Indian, they all agree about their faith: there is no misunderstanding whatever. What does this prove? It proves beyond all doubt

that the Roman Catholic Church, and she alone, speaks a language which all nations, all people, and tribes understand in the same way; understand as naturally as the child understands the language of its mother.

4. *The Church is infallible.*

a. Protestants hold as well as we do, that the teacher whom God has given us, must be infallible. If the Bible is not this teacher, the Church must be, who consequently is infallible.

b. It is maintained by a large number of Christians and Jews that the Synagogue was infallible; whether it was or not, I know not. But this I know, that the decisions we have from the Synagogue in matters of faith, are correct. Cf. Mt. ii, 6. John xi, 49, 51. The Synagogue was but a figure of the Church of Christ.

c. It is the clear doctrine of Hôly Scripture. If the Church could err, the gates of hell would, contrary to Christ's promise, prevail against her. Our Lord said to his Apostles and their successors: "Go, teach all nations –and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." He promised his Apostles the Spirit of truth, who shall abide with them forever. Now, if notwithstanding the solemn pledges of our divine Lord, the Catholic Church can go astray, then we have nothing in this world upon which we can rely.

In conclusion the Rt. Rev. Orator speaks briefly of those trite charges brought against Catholics of disloyalty, superstition, and hatred of Protestants, requesting his Protestant hearers to meditate upon what he had spoken to them, and to act according to their conviction.

Plan of a lecture delivered by Bishop Baltes of Alton.

VI.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY GHOST.

The Holy Church has dedicated this Sunday of the Ecclesiastical Year to the special honor of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. In accordance with Her mind and spirit, I will suggest to you some of the motives that should encourage within us a special homage to this sublimest of all mysteries.

I. THE DIVINE PERSONS HONOR EACH OTHER.

1. *The Son honors the Father and the Holy Ghost.*

a. The Son honors the Father. "I honor my Father." John viii, 49. He honors his Father by giving him the most glorious titles. Now, he calls him *holy:* "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me" John xvii, 11; now, he calls him *just:* "Just Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee" John xvii, 25; now, he calls him *Lord of heaven and earth:* "I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." Mt. xi, 25. "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee." Mk. xiv, 36.

He honors his Father by praying to him with profound humility. He bowed his knees before him, and on Mount Olivet he fell upon his face, praying. Mt. xxvi, 39. On the Cross he prayed with tears to his Heavenly Father. Heb. v, 7.

He honors his Father by performing all things for his glory. "I seek not my own glory." John viii, 50. When he sees the house of his Father dishonored, the Lamb has the aspect of a lion. Mt. xxi, 13. John ii, 16. At last he died to promote the honor of his Father.

He honors his Father by attributing to him all his charitable and miraculous actions, and by manifesting to the world that he received his divine nature from the Father. "The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself. But the Father who abideth in me, he doeth the works." John xiv, 10. "I live by the Father." vi, 58. "That which my Father giveth me, is greater than all?" x, 29.

b. The Son honors the Holy Ghost. He warns men never to commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, saying: "He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." Mt. xii, 32. Our Lord was never so austere as when speaking of the sin, by which the Holy Ghost is dishonored.

He honors him with the most glorious names, calling him the *Paraclete and the Spirit of truth* (John xv, 26); because he consoles us in time and eternity with spiritual joys, and, in opposition to the wicked spirit, teaches men truth. He calls him the *gift of God*, because charity is the principal grace, and even the source of all other graces; and *living water*, because the Holy Ghost cleanses our soul from sin. John iv, 10.

He honors the Holy Ghost, by promising him to the Holy Church, that He may accomplish, in Her, the work of redemption. "It is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." John xvi, 7. Thus Jesus endeavors to produce in his Apostles a great veneration for the Holy Ghost, possessing whom the spirits are angels, and without whom they are devils; possessing whom men are like to St. John the disciple, whom Jesus loved: and without whom they are like to Judas, who betrayed his Master.

2. *The Father and the Holy Ghost honor the Son.*

a. "The Father himself who hath sent me, hath given testimony of me." John v, 37. "To which of the Angels hath he said at any time: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Heb. i, 5.

b. The Father and the Holy Ghost honored the Son at his baptism, and at his transfiguration on Tabor. The Son found a great consolation in this homage. For "lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." John xvii, 1. "And now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was." V, 5

The three Divine Persons have honored each other from all eternity. "For there are three that give testimony in heaven (from all eternity); the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." I John v, 7.

II. THE HOLY ANGELS AND THE CHURCH HONOR THE BLESSED TRINITY INCESSANTLY.

1. *The Angelic beings* do homage to the Blessed Trinity. "Bless ye the Lord, all ye his Angels, you that are mighty in strength." Ps. cii, 20. "Praise ye him, all his Angels: praise ye him, all his hosts." Ps. cxlviii, 2.

They cried from the day of their creation one to another: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts; all the earth is full of his glory!" Isai. vi, 3. They are the morning stars, the sons of God, who made a joyful melody, when God laid the foundation of the earth. Job xxxviii, 7.

When the Son of God was born in human flesh, the Heavenly Hosts praised him, saying: "Glory to God in the highest!"

2. *The Holy Church* honors the Blessed Trinity with great fervor. Incessantly does she exclaim: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!" It is an undeniable fact that this act of adoration was in use in early Christendom. Pope Damasus, by the advice of St. Jerome, had it added to every Psalm. Whenever we pronounce these sacred words, we make acts of various virtues. It is an act of *faith*, an act of faith in the greatest mystery of the Christian religion. It is an act of *hope*—hope of heaven, which we hope to enter, in order to glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost for evermore. And it is an act of *charity*, wherein we desire that all creatures may praise the Blessed Trinity. So glorious is the honor of this mystery, that it is the incessant occupation of the Saints in heaven. "They rested not day and night, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come." Apoc. iv, 8.

Peroration: Let us honor the mystery of the Blessed Trinity with great fervor; let us frequently and with great devotion repeat the hymn of adoring praise: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."—Let us foster in our hearts a vivid desire for the eternal mansions, and for the blessed hour, when we are to join for evermore the praises of the Blessed Trinity by the Angels and Saints.

La Theologie affective, par M. Louis Bail, Paris 1638.

Corpus Christi.

III.

JESUS' LOVE IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

"He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord." Ps. cx, 4. The solemnity of this day reminds us of the ardent charity displayed by Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and exhorts us to thank him from the depth of our hearts for this remembrance of his wonderful works. Let me then invite your attention to this ardent love of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

1. St. John expressed the tenderness of love manifested in this Blessed Sacrament in these words: "Jesus, knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own, who were in the world, he loved them to the end." John xiii, 1. Jesus, who had always loved men, would leave for them a remembrance of his love.

a. "Love tends always to perfect union." St. Thomas Aquinas. This explains why friends have a great desire to be near to one another. Jesus loved his own to the end, by manifesting his desire ever to stay with them.

b. Jesus did not institute this Sacrament of Charity as long as he could stay with men in a visible form, because as long as he could converse with men the desire of his heart was satisfied. But at the approach of the hour when he had to ascend into heaven to fulfill the will of his father, his wisdom and omnipotence found a means to be with his Father in heaven, in the society of the angelic hosts, and yet, at the same time, to remain on earth with the beloved children of men, by instituting this divine Sacrament.

Is St. Thomas not right, when he calls this our treasure the *Sacrament of Charity?*

2. It does not diminish his love, that he does not appear

visibly in our midst. Do we not take a great delight in conversing with our friends or parents at night, when we cannot see them? So long as this mortal life lasts, we live in darkness, not being able to behold our Saviour with our bodily eyes. Yet we are assured that he is present in our tabernacles, hearing our voice and listening to our petitions; and that, although we do not see him, yet he sees us. Therefore we received a greater grace than the contemporaries of Jesus in the Holy Land. For Jesus was not at one and the same time present in all the towns and villages. Wherefore pious people had often to make a long journey, in order to present to him their petitions. We have him always in our midst. And we know that he will abide with us forever. "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Mt. xxviii, 20.

3. The Son of God who sitteth at the right hand of his Father, deigns to live in our midst, in poverty. That we might not be afraid to speak to him and ever to take refuge in his mercy, he is kind enough to hide his majesty under the species of bread, as under a veil. He wishes to be on terms of familiarity with us; therefore he is not averse to abiding in a poor church and tabernacle, nor does he refuse to be visited by the poor, ignorant, and deformed. He visits the sick in their misery and is desirous to give himself to them as their strengthening food for the last and decisive journey. Thus does our Jesus converse with us poor and wretched sinners, without regard to his infinite majesty.

Peroration: Let us thank our Lord, by frequently visiting him in his abode with men, and by receiving often and worthily this Holy Sacrament. Let us thank him, especially on this solemn day, by devoutly attending divine service.

J. B. Campadelli.

Second Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

REFUSING THE DIVINE CALL.

The election of the just, and the reprobation of the wicked, are inscrutable mysteries. Yet, as much as is necessary to be known by Christians, Jesus has taught us by the parable of this day, without satisfying vain curiosity. For this end he speaks

I. ON THE CALL EXTENDED TO MEN.

1. *Nature of this call.*

a. It is divine. The man who made a great supper and invited many is God,—Jesus, the Son of God, "who hath delivered us, and called us by his holy calling." II Tim. i, 9.

b. It is holy. "He hath called us by his holy calling." L. c., By this holy calling God selects a child of Adam, a child of wrath and malediction, exalting him to the dignity of a child of blessing and grace, to the dignity of a Saint.

c. It is a free call. The man who made a great supper, and is called a king (Mt. xxii, 2), could not be forced to this display of his kindness; but he did so of his own free will, "that he might show the riches of the glory of his kingdom." Esther i, 4. "Who hath called us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the times of the world." II Tim. i, 9.

d. It is a universal call. All men are invited to the great supper, to-wit: the Church and heaven; even "the poor and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame, those in the highways and hedges," for in the Church of Christ "there is neither Gentile nor Jew, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free." Col. iii, 11.

2. *Manner of this call.*

God calls men in a double manner:

a. Outwardly, by teaching and preaching, in order to take away the darkness of understanding caused by original sin. "He sent his servant at the hour of supper." Mt. xxii, 3.

There are several servants. These are the heralds of the divine word, the Apostles, and apostolic men.

They were sent *first* to the Jews. "After the supper had been prepared, Christ sacrificed, and risen, the Apostles were sent." St. Augustine. "To you it behoved us to speak first the word of God: but seeing you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life; behold, we turn to the Gentiles," said Paul and Barnabas to the Jews. Act. xiii, 46. For the Apostles had been commissioned to go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Mk. xvi, 15.

b. *Inwardly*, by the inspirations of divine grace. This grace is *necessary*, that the frailty of our will may be supported, and thus the word of God may become efficacious. "*Compel* them to come in." Examples of the great efficacy of grace are Paul and Augustine.

II. ON THE DECLINING OF THE INVITATION.

1. *Co-operation with the divine call, or grace, is necessary.* "He who created thee without thee, will not save thee without thee." St. Augustine. "Turn ye to me, saith the Lord of Hosts: and I will turn to you, saith the Lord of Hosts." Zach. i, 3.

2. *Man often refuses to co-operate with the divine call:*

a. Because he is attached to earthly things. "The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God." I Cor. ii, 14. "I have bought five yoke of oxen."

b. Because he is enslaved by the vice of pride. In order to see the farm he had purchased, one of those men who were invited declined to partake of spiritual joys. "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." Eccle. i, 2.

c. Because man is the slave of his own flesh. As the Jews lost all taste for the manna, because they longed for the meatpots of Egypt, so all taste for the sweetness of spiritual joys is lost by carnal lust. He who had married a wife, and therefore could not come, is the representative and spokesman of those carnal persons who renounce heaven rather than their

fleshly lusts. "This therefore I say, brethren: The time is short; it remaineth, that they also who have wives be as those who have not." I Cor. vii, 29.

III. ON REPROBATION.

Most awful is the judgment of being excluded from divine charity and communion; but, at the same time, it is most just, as we learn from this parable.

1. *The wrath of the king against those who were invited, but who refused to come, was just.*—With God, wrath is not the eruption of passion, but the zeal of justice, directed against him who, by not accepting his loving invitation, has insulted his infinite majesty, and "hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath offered an affront to the Spirit of grace." Heb. x, 29.

2. *The sentence pronounced by the king was just.* "I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper." Thus doth God, by a just judgment, reject those who refuse to accept his call of grace.

a. God does whatever is necessary for our salvation. He prepares the supper, and sends his invitations. "What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done to it?" Isai. v, 4.

b. But man, the sinner, is not willing to be saved. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and thou wouldst not.*" Mt. xxiii, 37. Man must do what he is able to do, and pray for what he is not able.

3. *His sentence of reprobation is most just.*

a. He gives them up to the desires of their heart, as he suffered those who were invited to go after their business. Rom. i, 23. ff.

b. God invites others instead of those who were first invited, that his house may be filled, and that the latter may be forever cut off from the hope of recovering their place. Thus David was elected instead of Saul; Mathias, instead of Judas. Thus the converted Gentiles succeeded in place of the chosen

people, and still occupy the place of apostatized Catholics. Thus the Saints fill the places of the rebellious angels. "It is no longer in the power of man to enter into judgment with God He shall break in pieces many and innumerable; and shall make others to stand in their stead." Job. xxxiv, 23.

c. He condemns irrevocably those who decline the invitation. "Because I called, and you refused: I also will laugh in your destruction." Prov. i, 24-26. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked." Gal. vi, 7.

Peroration: Behold! God has invited you and all men for the great supper of his celestial glory—out of sheer love and commiseration. Accept this honorable invitation, by co-operating with his grace. For those who decline the invitation are guilty of black ingratitude, wherefore they are deservedly excluded from the great supper.

N. de Dijon.

VI.

THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

The master of the house was with good reason angry with those who declined his invitation to the banquet of Holy Communion upon the most frivolous pretexts. There is yet another ingratitude of which He has to complain, namely, the ingratitude of those who, after the reception of Holy Communion, either do not make their thanksgiving at all, or, if they do, make it in a superficial manner. That we may not be guilty of such ingratitude, let us choose as the subject for our present meditation, the thanksgiving after Holy Communion, and consider

1. The *motives* that should induce us to give fervent thanks; and
2. The *manner* in which we should make our thanksgiving.

I. THE MOTIVES.

1. *The deference we owe this Blessed Sacrament.*

St. Philip Neri, on seeing, one day, a communicant leave

the church shortly after he had received the Holy Sacrament, ordered two boys to accompany him with burning candles in their hands. When the man, in amazement, hastened to the Saint to inquire what it meant, he received the unexpected answer: "When the sacred body of our Lord is carried to a sick person, it is decent, and customary, to accompany the Lord of Hosts with burning torches. As you left the church, whilst you had the sacred body within you, it was only decorous to carry a light before you." If a person of rank should visit you, would you dare to leave him alone?—Do you not know who was the first that received Holy Communion without giving thanks? It was Judas.

2. *Charity and gratitude.*

If a bridegroom were to visit his bride, bearing rich presents for her in his hands, should she scarcely look at him or his presents, but go about her daily employments as though he were not there, would she show love and gratitude? Make the application.

3. *Our own advantage.*

When a beggar does not thank you for the rich alms you have given him, you feel disinclined to relieve him again. If you do not give sincere thanks, you induce Jesus to deny you those precious presents which he holds in his hands for you. If a man of great wealth were to appoint you a quarter of an hour, within which time you might gather up whatever precious things you most admired in his palace, do you think you would spend these fifteen minutes in idleness, or in vain conversation? After the reception of the Blessed Sacrament our Saviour himself abides in your heart, having the treasures of his Sacred Heart opened before you. Jesus is far more anxious to give us graces than we are to receive them. You could be chaste as St. Aloysius, meek as St. Francis of Sales, patient as Job, if you would frequently receive the bread of the strong, and implore your Jesus, when in your heart, for these virtues. Oh! let us for the future draw from this fountain of grace!

II. THE MANNER OF MAKING THE THANKSGIVING.

After receiving Holy Communion, you may represent to yourself that, like the Blessed Virgin or Simeon, you embrace the sweet Child Jesus, or that you repose in the bosom of your Saviour, like St. John at the Last Supper; or represent to yourself Jesus sitting on the throne of his majesty, and yourself prostrate at his feet, and then say to him whatever your own heart may suggest. Speak to him words of charity and reverence, of humility and contrition, of supplication and ardent desire. In order to facilitate your conversation with your dearest Saviour, you may put to yourself the following questions:

1. Who is Jesus and who am I?

2. What has Jesus done for me, and what have I done for him?

3. What does Jesus require me to do, and what shall I ask of him?

1. *Who is Jesus?* The Son of the living God, God himself, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the Creator of heaven and earth. Waves and winds obey his voice; the light of the sun, rain, and dew are sent by him. Hosts of angels are prostrate at his feet. He has created you also, and will one day judge you.

And who are you? In relation to God, you are less than the worm creeping in the dust is in relation to the whole world and the angels. You are a wretched sinner who has deserved hell a great many times. And yet Jesus and you are united in the most intimate union! Now make acts of faith, charity, and profound humility. The great Pope Pius IX entered from time to time the hovels of the poor and sick, consoling them and making them presents. The reverence and gratitude of such poor persons in presence of the Vicar of Christ is easier imagined than described. Behold! you are a poor sick and sinful person, and in Holy Communion an infinitely greater Lord comes to visit you. Say with Elizabeth: Whence is this to me that my Lord should come to me?" Or with St. Peter: "De-

part from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Lk. v, 8. Conscious of your inability to praise the Lord worthily, implore the Blessed Virgin, your Holy Angel, all the Saints and Angels, to praise the Lord your God for you.

2. *What has Jesus done for me, and what have I done for him?*

a. This Jesus, whom you have received into your heart, has become man for you, has led a hidden life for thirty years, has carried your sins, sweat blood for you, and died on the Cross for you, knowing you by name. He has instituted the Holy Eucharist for you, and has, notwithstanding your ingratitude, often entered your soul. Oh! be thankful to him, at least at the blessed hour of Holy Communion.

b. What have you done for Jesus? How grateful ought you to be towards him who has saved your life! Could you refuse him a favor? But your Jesus, who saved you from eternal death at the price of his own blood, has repeatedly asked you the favor to forsake certain sins and faults, to shun certain societies, etc., and did you do him that favor? No! What did you promise him in your last confession? Did you keep your promise? No!—On the contrary, you are guilty of having conspired against him, by heaping sin upon sin, although you know how he hates sin. A Parisian workman, who had publicly insulted a sister of Charity, was, when attacked by the cholera, nursed by this same sister. In consequence of her great solicitude the workman recovered, but the sister died. This man was, for a long time, seen regularly visiting the grave of the sister, to pray and weep. Have you not offered greater insults to your Saviour? Oh! fall down on your knees and give him thanks from the depth of your heart, and bring forth better fruit for the future.

3. *What is it that Jesus demands of you, and what should you ask him for?* Jesus demands your heart, your own self. He gave himself to you, that you might give yourself to him. Give him, then, your soul, your body, your eyes, hands, feet, etc., that you may never abuse them by committing sin. Ask him,

after Holy Communion, what you must do, and Jesus will tell you that you must forsake certain sins, shun certain occasions of sin, etc.

For what shall you ask? In the first place ask for the grace of perseverance, or of a happy death. Then speak to Jesus confidently about all your needs. Pray also for your relations and friends, for the Pope, bishops, and priests. But pray with *confidence.* "Amen, Amen I say to you: If you ask the Father any thing in my name, he shall give it you." John xvi, 23.

Peroration: Continue your thanksgiving during the whole day, by avoiding unnecessary distractions. As many of you will no doubt receive the Holy Eucharist during this octave of Corpus Christi, I hope that you will all make a fervent thanksgiving, and that every one of you will experience how sweet is the Lord, and how liberal in distributing his gifts.

J. Schmitt.

Third Sunday After Pentecost.

(*Sunday of the Sacred Heart.*)

V.

THE SACRED HEART THE PATTERN OF OUR HEARTS.

"Look, and make it according to the pattern that was shown thee." Exodus xxv, 40. This Sunday is in a special manner devoted to the honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the most wonderful heart that was ever created. Whatever is grand and beautiful in heaven and on earth is found in this divine Heart. It is an ocean of wisdom and love; it is the light, the consolation, and the delight of mankind, since it is the Heart of the divine Shepherd who loved his own to the end. John xiii, 1. This Sacred Heart is continually shown to us as the grand pattern according to which our own heart should be formed. It is the pattern of our own heart in regard to what it should abhor, and in regard to what it should desire.

I. THE SACRED HEART OUR PATTERN IN WHAT WE SHOULD ABHOR.

1. *We should abhor to have our heart attached to earthly things:*

a. To the treasures of the world.

The heart of our Saviour was not attached for one moment to the treasures of this world, as his voluntary poverty clearly evinces. "He debased himself." Philip ii, 7. In poverty he entered this world, and in poverty he left this world. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Lk. ix, 58.

Behold the pattern for our hearts! We must not love inordinately the gold of the world, we must not attach our hearts to earthly things. "He that loveth gold, shall not be justified. Many have been brought to fall for gold; and the beauty thereof

hath been their ruin." Ecclus. xxxi, 5, 6. "There is also another grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches kept to the hurt of the owner." Eccle. v, 12.

b. To the honors of the world.

The heart of our divine Saviour did not for one moment love the honors of the world. He commenced his earthly sojourn in a stable, instead of in a royal palace. He lived thirty years as the supposed son of a poor carpenter. And when the time came to manifest himself to men by his stupendous doctrine and miracles, he remained the most humble of men; so much so that, when the people would pay him homage, he fled into the mountain. "I receive not glory from men." John v, 41. He closed his earthly life on the tree of malediction. "He was reputed with the wicked." Isai. liii, 12.

Behold the pattern for our hearts! We must not covet earthly honors. "Let us not become desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Gal. v, 26. "Whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister." Mt. xx, 26.

c. To the joys of the world.

The heart of our Saviour did not for one moment love the joys of the world. The way of his life leads over thorns. "The Lord Jesus, as long as he lived, had not been one hour without suffering." *Imitation* ii, 12. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" Lk. xxiv, 26.

Behold the pattern for our hearts! Let us not seek our consolation in earthly joys. They are obstacles in the way of our salvation. "Woe to you that sleep upon beds of ivory, and are wanton on your couches; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the best ointments." Amos vi, 4, 6. "It remaineth that they who rejoice, be as they who are not rejoicing." I Cor. vii, 30.

2. *We should abhor all indifference as to celestial things.*

a. The heart of our divine Shepherd was filled with love for heavenly things. Every movement was an act of divine charity, a flame tending heavenward. And how great were the

efforts of this heart to enkindle the hearts of men with the fire of divine charity! "I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" Lk. xii, 49.

b. Behold the pattern of our heart! Indifference as to heavenly things is the foreboding of eternal ruin, it being a fatal disease. "I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." Apoc. iii, 16. Our hearts ought to burn with celestial love. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Mt. vi, 33. And as Jesus has enkindled the divine spark in the hearts of men, so we should do also. Innumerable occasions present themselves, especially to parents, superiors, etc.

II. THE SACRED HEART OUR PATTERN IN WHAT WE SHOULD LONG FOR.

We should long

1. *For the honor of our Heavenly Father.*

How ardently did the heart of our Saviour long for this honor! "I honor my Father." John viii, 49. The truth of this assertion is manifest from all which he did and suffered. "I have glorified thee upon the earth." John xvii, 4. Behold the pattern for our hearts! Nothing should be to us more sacred than to hallow the name of God. All our thoughts, words and deeds should tend to this end. "Glorify and bear God in your body." I Cor. vi, 20.

2. *For the salvation of immortal souls.*

Great was the desire of Jesus for their salvation. "The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save." Lk. ix, 56. You may measure his desire by the greatness of the price at which he bought them. Behold your pattern! Our hearts should long for the salvation of souls, and our hands should work for it. "No sacrifice is so acceptable to God as zeal for the salvation of souls." St. Gregory the Great. Say not: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Gen. iv, 9. Say not, I am no bishop, no priest. The duty of contributing to the salvation of our neighbor is incumbent on you also, particularly on parents, heads of families, etc.

3. *For a holy life.*

Your Saviour said: "My food is to do the will of Him that sent me." John iv, 34. To fulfill the will of God, was the only

desire of this divine Heart. It was humble and meek, patient and merciful. Oh! that our hearts would thirst after sanctity also! "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is all man." Eccle. xii, 13.

Peroration: Let us then earnestly endeavor to conform our hearts to the heart of Jesus. "Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made comformable to the image of his Son: that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren." Rom. viii, 29.

J. Schuen.

VI.

THE SACRED HEART AND THE SINNERS.

This Sunday is in a special manner devoted to the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I need scarcely remind you that the adoration of that Sacred Heart is the adoration in the fullest and deepest sense of Him whose loving heart it is. The principal reason which urges us to render a special homage to that Divine Heart is because, as the human heart is the symbol and seat of love, so the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the symbol and seat of his infinite love towards us poor sinners. And since we are reminded of this divine love by the Gospel of to-day, it is a fitting occasion for me to address you on this important and consoling subject. The love of Jesus toward sinners is manifest, because he suffers, seeks, and receives, them.

I. JESUS SUFFERS THE SINNERS.

How patient is our Jesus toward us, who offend him by so many sins!

1. Mortal sin is infinitely abominable in the eyes of God. I will not dwell on the outrage committed against divine majesty by renouncing obedience, the sinner saying by his evel deeds, I will not serve; nor on the outrage on Jesus Christ the Crucified, who is mocked at, and whose crucifixion is renewed, by sin. Let me only call your attention to the fact, that the hatred of sin increases with the increase of personal sanctity. St. Oringa, when hearing an impure expression, was compelled to vomit through

the disgust and loathing it occasioned within her. St. Stanislaus fainted on hearing by chance an immodest word. But what is the sanctity of St. Oringa and of St. Stanislaus, or of all the Saints, in comparison with the sanctity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus? Less than the light of a candle in comparison with the dazzling glory of the sun.

2. How great is the number of mortal sins committed by one habitual sinner—by the blaspheming, cursing and swearing, sinner; by the sensualist, etc.? The sins committed daily in the whole world, cannot be measured. Like foul and poisonous mist they ascend continually from the earth.

3. And who is he that dares to insult the all-powerful God? Man, a poor creature, the work of His hands, redeemed from eternal death by the blood of the Son of God, and destined for the vision and fruition of God.

Have we not every reason to admire the patience of God, who not only bears with us, ungrateful sinners, but even sacrifices himself for us every day?

II. JESUS GOES AFTER THE SINNER UNTIL HE FINDS HIM.

1. He revealed to us the love of his heart in the Gospel of this day, by representing himself as the good shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the desert, and goes after that which was lost until he find it. And he rejoices, although he derives no benefit from having found the wanderer. Were all men to abandon him, by giving themselves over to sin and hell, they would not in the smallest degree diminish his beatitude.

2. Therefore the miserable condition of the sinner induces the good Shepherd to have pity on him, as a mother is induced to love her son, however grievously he may have offended her.—The misery of the sinful man who has gone astray is great indeed. Before, he dwelt in the house of his Father in peace and happiness. He was a temple of God, the angels of heaven protecting him. With ineffable delight he lifted heart and hands up to heaven, drawing the fullness of grace from the Heart of his Saviour. And now! His soul is like to a desecrated church which may not shelter the Blessed Sacrament. No sacred songs are heard, no prayers are said any longer in this once temple of

God; but the hideous vermin of impure thoughts and desires have made their haunts therein. Instead of the sweet peace of God, wild lust, torturing remorse, and discontent reign. Thus he roves about in the desert, being every moment in danger of being swallowed up by hell.

2. But in the desert of his sinful life the sinner often hears the voice of the good Shepherd, speaking to him through his conscience, or through the preachers of God's word, or through the mouth of the confessor, or through misfortune. Examine yourself, in order to know whether you are one of the lost sheep of the good Shepherd. And if so, harden not your heart when you hear the warning voice of your own Jesus.

III. JESUS RECEIVES THE SINNER WITH GREAT KINDNESS.

1. When the good Shepherd has found the lost sheep, he lays it upon his shoulders rejoicing. Jesus renders the return of the sinner as easy as possible. Therefore no one should be deterred from returning to Jesus by the difficulty of shunning certain occasions of sin, or of confessing his heinous crimes, or of amending his life; or by the fear that Jesus will not forgive him, after having made so many fervent promises and broken all.

3. How little does such a one know the Heart of our Saviour! The deeper a sinner has fallen, the more Jesus rejoices at his return. A father's joy at the recovery of his child is the greater, the more dangerous was the disease which threatened to deprive him of him. Jesus says himself, that "there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." Believe me, it is not so arduous to leave the ways of sin. The grace of Jesus will assist you, and the peace of a clear conscience will amply repay you for all efforts which result in true conversion.

Peroration: Such being the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the sinner, no one has a reason to be despondent. In this Heart you find the fountain of the most precious blood that was shed as an atonement of your sins. And if you are troubled in your mind on account of your many venial sins, take refuge in this divine source of consolation and strength, and "you shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains." Isai. xii, 3.

J. Schmitt.

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

CONDITION OF MERITORIOUS WORKS.

"Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net." Lk. v, 5. I fear that many Christians, when they have to appear before the tribunal of the same Master, will be compelled to make the same avowal as St. Peter: "Master, we have labored all our lifetime, and have taken nothing, for which we may expect to receive a reward in heaven." For there are many who work hard enough, but not for heaven. That we may not be of their number, let us consider what is required in order that our work be meritorious for heaven.

I. WE MUST EMPLOY THE DAY TO WORK.

1. Peter who had labored all the night in vain, caught a great multitude of fishes in the day time. This reminds us of the necessity of working whilst it is day, i. e., *whilst we are in this world.* "I must work the works of Him that sent me, whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." John ix, 4. "Whatever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening." Ecclus. ix, 10. Our sojourn on earth is the time of sowing and planting; eternity is our harvest. As the kernel contains the vast tree that is to spring from it, so our temporal life contains, as if in a germ, eternity. We should therefore be very solicitous in employing our time well.

2. In the next world we cannot gain merits.

a. *The reprobate in hell* suffer exceedingly great torments, without the least avail. If they had been willing to suffer a portion of them on earth, by renouncing their sinful enjoyments, and fulfilling the will of God, they would now be in the joy of the Lord. If one of them could return upon earth, how mortified and edifying would be his life! Yet it is too late: the night

is come for him, when no man can work. To us it is yet day time, for we are yet able to escape hell, and gain heaven.

b. *Souls in purgatory* suffer great torments too; but they cannot gain merits. They can only atone for their sins. If they had suffered, fasted, and prayed more on earth, they would now find all these works recorded in the Book of Life.

c. *The Saints in heaven* love and praise God with Seraphic ardor; but they cannot increase their glory. Every additional prayer that they might have said on earth, would have received its reward in heaven; but now the time of sowing and planting is past.

Let us then, whilst life lasts, comply with the warning of the Apostle: "Whilst we have time, let us do good." Gal. vi, 10. "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." II Cor. vi, 2.

II. WE MUST BE IN THE STATE OF SANCTIFYING GRACE.

As long as Jesus was not in the ship, Peter took nothing. We have Jesus with us, when we are in the state of sanctifying grace, which is the second condition of performing meritorious works. This is evident from the following considerations:

1. He who is not in the state of sanctifying grace, is in the state of mortal sin, consequently an enemy of God. But an enemy of God cannot gain heaven.

2. By our good works we must, so to say, purchase heaven. Consequently they must be proportionate to the joys of heaven. But when the soul is destitute of sanctifying grace, she is dead to God and heaven, and cannot work. Besides, by this grace we are intimately united with Jesus Christ, so that we partake of his merits, by which our own works are made meritorious before God. Jesus himself explains this in the following words: "I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing." John xv, 5. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me." V, 4. As a branch that is separated from the vine cannot produce fruit, because it is destitute of life, so neither can we when we are separated from Jesus—by sin.

Man deprived of sanctifying grace is therefore in a lamentable condition. The heathens related of certain men who had committed a great crime, that they were condemned in hell to draw water incessantly into a bottomless barrel. Such is the condition of man in the state of sin; all his labor is fruitless. And what will be his final fate? "If any one remaineth not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire; and he burneth." John xv, 6.

III. OUR WORKS MUST BE GOOD IN THEMSELVES, AND MUST BE PERFORMED WITH A GOOD INTENTION.

It was not enough for Peter to have Jesus with him; he was also obliged to work, and to let down the net. It is not enough for us to be in the state of grace: we must also perform good works.

1. These works must be good in themselves. By sin we cannot gain merits however good our motive may be. Should any one steal, in order to give alms; or lie, in order to protect his neighbor, he would, far from meriting reward, incur punishment.

2. All good works must be performed with the pure intention of serving God and fulfilling his holy will, as Peter said: "At thy word." A carpenter or other tradesman cannot expect his wages from another person than him for whom he works. If you are ever so industrious, with only the motive of earning money, you are not entitled to a reward from God. The Pharisees, who prayed frequently and fasted austerely, had no reward to expect in heaven, because they were led by vanity to perform these works. (Mt. vi, 5). "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." I Cor. xiii, 3.

And as a bad intention deprives the greatest works of their meritoriousness, so a good intention renders the least works meritorious before God. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do; do all things for the glory of God." I Cor. x, 32. He who gives his neighbor to drink a cup of water in the

name of Jesus, shall not lose his reward. Mt. ix 40. The poor widow gave more than the rich men. Lk. xxi, 1.

How many opportunities are offered to you, parents, and children—to you, sick and poor people, to gain merits for heaven! It is precisely the intention, or motive, of our works that will justify the word of our Saviour: "So shall the last be first, and the first last."

Peroration: What would you say of a farmer who would neither sow nor plant in spring? A greater fool is he who does neither plant nor sow for life everlasting, although he knows that he will have to suffer hunger throughout the never ending winter of his eternity. O let us perform good works whilst there is time. Above all, make every effort to be in the state of grace; pray, fast, and give alms to the poor, and to the church, and make a good intention every morning, which you should often repeat during the day, especially when your work seems arduous to you. By so doing you will change stones into gold.

J. Schmitt.

VI.

MANY ARE IN NEED THROUGH THEIR OWN FAULT.

"We have labored all the night, and have taken nothing." This complaint is often heard now-a-days also. Although many poor people may assert with perfect truth that they have labored hard, yet there are many others whose poverty is through their own fault. Some of the faulty occasions are the following:

I. LAZINESS.

There are many of our fellow-men who show neither zeal nor industry in the discharge of the duties of their calling, so that poverty is the necessary consequence, as Holy Scripture and experience testify.

1. *Holy Scripture.* "He that is loose and slack in his work, is the brother of him that wasteth his own works." Prov xviii, 9. "Every sluggard is always in want." Ibid. xxi, 5.

2. *Reason and experience.* How can he catch fishes who will not let down his net? "Drowsiness shall be clothed with rags." Prov. xxiii, 21.

II. LAVISHNESS.

Many dissipate their property

1. Through folly. (*a.*) They have not learned how to save. "Remember poverty in time of abundance; and the necessities of poverty in the day of riches." Ecclus. xviii, 25. (*b.*) They do not live according to their condition. "Let the milk of the goats be enough for thy food, and for the necessities of thy house, and for maintainance of thy handmaids." Prov. xxvii, 27. (*c.*) They attempt rash speculations, through greed of gold, by which their means are exhausted.

2. Through extravagance in food and dress. "He that loveth good cheer, shall be in want; he that loveth wine and fat things, shall not be rich." Prov. xxi, 17. "They that give themselves to drinking, and that club together, shall be consumed." xxiii, 11. Pride, and a mania for fashions has ruined a great many families.

III. WANT OF FEAR OF GOD.

1. God deprives those men who do not fear Him, of his blessing. The house of king Saul, of king Achab, and of the High-priest Heli as well as our own daily experience bear testimony to this.

2. He visits them with sickness and all kinds of misfortune. "He that sinneth in the sight of his Maker, shall fall into the hands of the physician." Ecclus. xxviii, 15. "Want is from the Lord in the house of the wicked." Prov. iii, 33. We witness an illustration of this truth in the history of Israel. "God hath turned rivers into a wilderness, and the sources of water into dry grounds; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein," etc. Ps. cvi, 33-41.

If wickedness were not multiplied, evils would not be multiplied either. "Men are apt to exclaim: The times are bad. Let us live good lives, and the times will be good too." St. Augustine.

J. J. Haubs.

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

NATURE OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE.

Although the Scribes and Pharisees, by their accurate observance of external works, gained the admiration of the people, yet Jesus finds their justice wanting, and demands of his followers a far greater justice. There are many Scribes and Pharisees among Christians also, who deceive themselves as regards the nature of Christian virtue, thus regarding themselves as virtuous, when they are not. Let us then examine, wherein Christian virtue does not consist, and wherein it does consist.

I. WHEREIN DOES THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE NOT CONSIST?

1. *Not in avoiding great vices, and glaring injustice.* Men in general are deterred from these partly by human law and by the punishments assigned to its violation, partly by a natural fear of the opinion of their fellow-men.

2. *Not in a good reputation in society.* How great is the number of sins which escape the eyes of men! And poor and wretched indeed does a man appear in the sight of God, who has contented himself with abstaining from evil deeds, without performing many good ones.

3. *Not in works of external devotion*, such as frequenting divine service, reception of the holy sacraments, recitation of certain prayers, etc. All this is good and necessary; yet even hypocrites may perform these works.

4. *Not in the performance of extraordinary works*, which attract public attention. The most necessary duties—the duties imposed by the state of life—are often neglected because of the desire to do something extraordinary.

5. *Not in the performance of some few good works.*

If that were so, nearly all Christians would be virtuous, as there are very few, if any at all, who do not perform some good works.

II. WHEREIN DOES THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE CONSIST?

It consists in the earnest striving to fulfill, under all circumstances, the will of God exactly and conscientiously. He who is truly virtuous is anxious to fulfill

1. *The duties toward God.*

a. He adores, loves, and serves him as his Creator, as the Lord of heaven and earth, and thanks him for all benefits received. "He is the Lord thy God, and him they shall adore." Ps. xliv, 12.

b. He confides in God the ruler of the world, receiving also tribulations and afflictions at his hands. "Our God is our refuge and strength, a helper in troubles, which have found us exceedingly." Ps. xlv, 2. "Now no chastisement for the present seemeth to bring with it joy, but sorrow: but afterwards it will yield to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruit of justice." Heb. xii, 11.

c. He fears God, the just judge, "who will render to every man according to his works." Rom. ii, 6.

2. *The duties to his neighbor.*

a. The duties of his state of life. A virtuous Christian, when intrusted with an office, will strictly observe the laws of justice. He who is subject will obey his Superiors (Heb. xiii, 17), and pay his taxes conscientiously. Parents will bring their children up in the discipline and correction of the Lord. Eph. vi, 4. Children will honor and love their parents, and pray for them. "Honor thy father and thy mother." Husbands will "love their wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it." Eph. v, 25. Masters will "do to their servants that which is just and equal; knowing that they also have a Master in heaven." Col. iv, 1.—Those in the service of others will be "obedient to their masters, in all things pleasing, not contradicting, not defrauding, but in all things showing good fidelity." Titus ii, 9, 10.

b. The duties of justice and equity. He will not do "any unjust thing in judgment, in rule, in weight, or in meas-

ure." Levit. xix, 35. He will observe the rule: "See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another." Tobias iv, 16.

c. The duties of charity. He will never give occasion of sin, and avail himself of every opportunity to perform good works, and thus to make sure his election. II Pet. i, 10.

Peroration: Do not attribute to yourself the title of a good Christian; for a great deal is required. "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there are who enter by it." Mt. vii, 13.

J. J. Haubs.

VI.

OUR MOST PRECIOUS SACRIFICES.

In the Old Covenant, it was commanded to offer sacrifices on various occasions. In the New Covenant, Jesus Christ has become our sacrifice of infinite value. Nevertheless the Christian ought to bring sacrifices to his God also. Let me speak to you on the most precious sacrifices we should offer to Almighty God.

I. WHAT ARE THESE SACRIFICES?

They consist

1. *In the fulfillment of the duties of our state of life.*

a. Every state of life imposes upon every one of us its own peculiar duties. The priest, the father of a family, the farmer, the merchant, all have their respective duties.

b. Because of the trouble and self-denial it requires to comply with these duties, they are sacrifices acceptable to the Lord. God has called you to a certain state of life. "Every one hath his proper gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that." I Cor. vii, 7. Therefore your state of life is the place which the Lord has assigned for you in his large household, and you can offer him no better sacrifice, than that of fulfilling the duties required by your vocation.

c. "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it." Col. iii, 17. Take heed to thy ministry, householder, servant, etc., and fulfill fully the obligations imposed by it.

2. *In the endurance of the tribulations incident to our state of life.*

a. Every vocation has its tribulations. The brighter the external appearance, the greater is often the secret misery.

b. The cheerful endurance of these tribulations presupposes courage and resignation, and for this reason they are so many sacrifices. They are very acceptable to God, because, as they are the consequence of your state of life, for which Providence destined you, they are sent by Him. For this reason, they are more valuable than voluntary works of austere penance.

c. Therefore, bear cheerfully whatever God has given you to bear. "Take all that shall be brought upon thee, and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience." Ecclus. ii, 4. "Most dearest, think not strange the burning heat which is to try you, as if some new thing happened to you: but rejoice, being partakers of the sufferings of Christ."

Carry after Jesus the cross of your vocation, father, mother, laborer, etc.

3. *In the exercises of the nature of our state of life.*

a. Every state of life demands its peculiar virtues. Children and servants must obey; parents and superiors must rule in charity; young people must live in chastity; married people must preserve fidelity; the poor must walk in contentment, the rich in humility.

b. Since the exercise of these virtues requires combat and self-denial, they are a sacrifice acceptable to the Lord, who himself requires them of you.

c. "Gird up thy loins, and take the staff in thy hand, and go." IV Kings iv, 29. Tread the path of virtue marked out for you by your state of life. "I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be perfect." Gen. xvii, 1. Exhortation to the practice of the virtues of particular states of life.

II. THE FRUIT OF THESE SACRIFICES.

These sacrifices are the cause

1. *Of great merits,*

a. Because they are very acceptable to God. We are told that they are a great delight to the Lord our God. "Good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom." Lk. vi, 38.

b. Because we have so many opportunities of offering them. We cannot always fast or give alms, or go to church, but every day we have an opportunity to fulfill the duties, endure the tribulations, and exercise the virtues of our state of life. How great an opportunity do they offer to us of gaining abundant merits!

2. *Of a splendid reward in heaven.*

God will reward every good action, even the drink of water. Mt. x, 42. The reward will be strictly proportionate to our works. "God will render to a man his work; and according to the ways of every one he will reward them." Job xxxiv, 11. "God will render to every man according to his works." Rom. ii, 6. Since the sacrifices imposed by our vocation are the cause of great merits, they will also obtain for us bright crowns. "When the Prince of pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never-failing crown of glory." I Pet. v, 4. Under the splendor of this crown many a poor servant-girl, many a patient widow, will shine brighter than the sun, because they fulfilled conscientiously their duties of their hidden life.

Peroration: How consoling is this doctrine! You need not be an Apostle, nor a missionary, nor a priest, in order to be able to make great sacrifices. Your state of life offers you an opportunity to make many and arduous sacrifices, and thus to accumulate great wealth for heaven. "Fulfill thy ministry." II Tim. iv, 5. Fulfill it for the love of God.

J. Schuen.

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

REVILERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

As God, in a miraculous way, fed four thousand men, so he feeds, in the ordinary way of nature, all creatures upon earth every day. This solicitous care of the Lord for all his creatures, which we call *Divine Providence*, is the source of great consolation. "Cast all your solicitude upon him; for he hath care of you." I Pet. v, 7. Say with confidence: "The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing." Ps. xxii, 1. "In peace in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest." Ps. iv, 9. Nevertheless, many Christians deprive themselves of the sweet consolation caused by entire confidence in Divine Providence: Some are even revilers of Divine Providence.

I. *These are those who, being feeble in faith, doubt the existence of Providence.*

1. *Notion.* Divine Providence is, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, "the principle concealed in God according to which things are ordained." It is consequently the product of three divine attributes:

a. Of the infinite knowledge—omniscience of God. He knows all creatures, their end and the means fitted for this end. Jesus knew the number and need of the multitudes, and also the means to help them.

b. Of the divine will, by which he decrees to impart to all creatures the means necessary for the execution of their design. Thus Jesus was moved with compassion, and in his holy will he decreed to feed the people.

c. Of divine omnipotence, which furnishes to all creatures the means of obtaining their end, "reaching from end to end mightily, and ordering all things sweetly." Wisd. viii, 1.

2. Many doubt the existence of Divine Providence.

a. Some doubt or deny God's omniscience, saying: "The

Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob understand." "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? or he that formed the eye, doth he not consider?" Ps. xciii, 7, 9. They are indeed "exiled from the eternal providence." Wisd. xvii, 2.

b. Some doubt God's willingness to help them, as the leper who said: "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Mk. i, 40.

c. Some doubt or deny divine omnipotence, as Israel did. "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" Ps. lxxvii, 19.

II. *Those who are prudent after the manner of the children of the world.*

1. Divine Providence is infallible in its dispositions, in order to lead creatures to their end. "Deus cujus providentia in sui dispositione non fallitur," prays the Church. We distinguish a two-fold providence:

a. The providence of the *Creator*, or *natural* providence, which furnishes to creatures the means of obtaining their natural wants—food and raiment. "Consider the ravens, for they do not sow, nor do they reap, neither have they store-house, nor barn, and God feedeth them. How much are you more valuable than they?" Lk. xii, 24. "Consider the lilies how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these." V. 27.

b. The providence of the *Redeemer*, or *supernatural* providence, which predestinates and leads rational creatures to their supernatural end.

c. Although Divine Providence is infallible in its dispositions, man must co-operate, in temporal as well as in eternal affairs, by industry, prayer, and confidence.

2. Those who are prudent after the manner of the children of the world distrust Divine Providence.

a. They have a feeble faith in divine omnipotence. Jesus required faith in his omnipotence. He said to the two blind men: "Do you believe that I can do this unto you?" Mt. ix, 28.

b. They have a feeble confidence in divine bounty. Jesus required confidence of the woman who was troubled with an issue

of blood, saying: "Take courage, daughter: thy faith hath made thee whole." Mt. ix, 22.

3. Such distrust is fatal in its consequences:

a. It is hated by God. "He that trusteth in his own devices, doeth wickedly." Prov. xii, 2. "He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool." Prov. xxviii, 26. "Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Jerem. xvii, 5.

b. It is detrimental, because the confidence in one's own self or earthly things, which is substituted in place of confidence in God, is "like the spider's web" (Job viii, 14) and causes perdition. Examples are Pharao, Goliath, Holofernes.

III. *The avaricious pervert the order of Divine Providence.*

1. This is the order and disposition of Divine Providence, that the rich should be the distributors of God's benefits to the poor,—faithful and wise stewards, whom the Lord setteth over his own family, to give them their measure of wheat in due season. Lk. xii, 42. "God made the little and the great; and he hath equally care of all." Wisd. vi, 8. He has care of the rich, immediately, by giving them temporal possessions; and of the poor, immediately, by coming to their succor through the rich. "The superfluous things which God has given us he did not give that they should be our property, but he only gave them to us in order that we might impart them to others." St. Augustine.

2. The avaricious disturb and pervert this order of Divine Providence.

a. They frustrate God's design, that the abundance of the rich should supply the want of the poor. "Let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may supply your want, that there may be an equality." II Cor. viii, 14.

b. They appropriate to themselves that which belongs to the poor, and offend them grievously. "Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer." I John iii, 15.

c. They are responsible for the many insults and blasphe-

mies against Divine Providence uttered by the poor and wicked. How abominable this is before the Lord we see in the history of David, to whom the prophet Nathan said: "The Lord hath taken away thy sin. Nevertheless, because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blasphemy, for this thing, the child that is born to thee shall surely die." II Kings xii, 13.

3. The fatal consequence is, that the poor is in peril of despair and eternal condemnation, and that the avaricious shall be rejected. "Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy." James ii, 13. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat," etc. Mt. xxv, 41. Dives who showed no pity on Lazarus, was buried in hell. Lk. xvi, 22.

Peroration: "Have confidence in the Lord with all thy heart; and lean not upon thy own prudence." Prov. iii, 5, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man." Jerem. xvii, 5. Be the instrument of Divine Providence; promote its designs by charitable works.

Nicolas of Dijon.

VI.

HOLY COMMUNION AS A VIATICUM.

Jesus having compassion on the multitude, said: "If I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way." Every one of us must, at some time or other, start on a long and perilous journey. "Man shall go into the house of his eternity." Eccles. xii, 5. The merciful Jesus has prepared for us a miraculous food for this our last journey—the Holy Eucharist—which we call for this reason *Viaticum.* Let us meditate on the graces conferred by the *Viaticum* on the soul of the sick person.

I. WE RECEIVE ALL GRACES NECESSARY TO DIE WELL.

1. *The sick person often receives even the grace not to die.*

a. Jesus, the good physician, healed, during his earthly sojourn, so many diseases, that "as many as touched him were

made whole." Mk. vi, 56. Why should the same Jesus not be able to exercise the same power in the Holy Sacrament? "He expels not only death, but also diseases." St. Cyril Alex.

b. Many diseases are the consequence, and punishment, of sins, and of disquietude of mind. When, by reconciliation and worthy reception of the Bread of Life, the cause is removed, the evil often vanishes also. Experience affords abundant confirmation of the fact, that often, after receiving the holy Viaticum, the sick person begins to recover. This was the case with the father of St. Gregory Nazianzen, and with three kings of France.

c. It is customary to use holy things, such as Holy Water, Relics, etc. We should be the more anxious to have recourse to the most blessed Sacrament. Exhortation to receive it in time.

2. *The Holy Viaticum is the source of great consolation.* When all earthly consolation is of no avail, to whom will you go but to "the God of all consolation?" II Cor. i, 3.

a. Consoling in the pains of sickness. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also by Christ doth our comfort abound." II Cor. i, 5. He who receives Jesus worthily, obtains the grace to suffer patiently for the love of Him. If Jesus says: "Come to me, and I will refresh you," how much more will he refresh us, when he comes to us?

b. Consoling in the fear of death. We have strong reason to tremble at the approach of death, which is to deprive us of all earthly goods and enjoyments, of our friends and relatives, nay even of our own body. But "it is impossible that death should not be overcome by him who is the Life." St. Cyril. In order that we might not fear death God has given to us the food of immortality. The Early Christians carried the Holy Eucharist about, in order to gain strength for enduring the terrors of the martyr's death.

3. *The Holy Viaticum confers abundant graces on the worthy receiver.*

a. The grace of perfect penance. Although the worthy

receiver is reconciled by sacramental absolution, his justification is increased by Holy Communion, his sufferings are rendered more meritorious by the intimate union with Jesus Christ, and hatred of sin is augmented. The priest gives us Jesus as "the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world;" and as we are subject to so many frailties until we breath our last, we receive in Holy Communion "the antidote by which we are delivered from daily trespasses, and preserved from mortal guilt." Trid. xiii, cap. ii.

b. The grace of fervent love. It is the banquet of love, instituted through tenderest love, demanding and imparting love.

c. The grace of perseverance. "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." Apoc. xii, 12. The most wicked one avails himself of the last moments to ruin souls; but "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." V, 11. This grace is also intimated by the words used in administering the Holy Viaticum: "Receive, brother, the viaticum of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he may preserve thee from the malignant enemy, and bring thee to life everlasting."

II. ALL GRACES NECESSARY TO LIVE FOR EVER.

When a man is to travel into a foreign country, he is anxious to have recommendatory letters from influential persons. What could be more recommendatory than the holy Viaticum—"the pledge of life everlasting," as the council of Trent calls it? As such it is made known to us

1. *By its types.*

a. The *Paschal Lamb*, which was eaten by the Israelites, when they were preparing for a journey, the doors being sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, and unleavened bread being used as for a journey, is the type of the unspotted Lamb of God who delivers us from the hands of the avenging angel, and strengthens us for our entry into the Land of promise.

b. *Elias*, who tired of living, cast himself down, and slept in the shadow of the juniper tree, and then, strengthened

by a miraculous bread, walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God. III Kings xix.

2. *By its institution.*

a. Jesus promised: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." John vi, 55. And those who do not receive this Blessed Sacrament he threatens in these words: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." V, 54.

b. The time of the institution intimates the same. "Jesus knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." John xiii, 1. By instituting the Holy Eucharist at the hour when he was to pass out of the world to the Father, he intimated that he passes with safety out of this world, who with Him starts on this his last journey.

3. *By the nature of this Blessed Sacrament.*

a. It furnishes a *safe-guard.* We receive the "Lord of hosts," to whom the angels minister. If God commanded to have the figures of Cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant, to intimate that his angels are ever near his sanctuary, we have sufficient reason to believe that, with the holy Viaticum, ministering spirits appear in the sick-room, to take henceforth the soul of the sick person under their special protection, and to lead her into eternity.

b. In this Holy Sacrament we receive a propitious judge. Jesus will be our judge. By receiving the holy Viaticum, we follow his own advice: "Make an agreement with thy adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him." Mt. v, 25. He who receives him worthily and fervently is reconciled with him in the way, so that, instead of a judge, a friend will await him in the next world.

c. We receive the most powerful intercessor. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just. And he is the propitiation for our sins." I John ii, 1.

Peroration: It is therefore an act of cruelty to deny to a

sick person the holy Viaticum until he is scarcely able to prepare himself for its worthy reception. If you desire to receive worthily this infinite treasure at the hour of your death, consider it as such in the days of health also. On account of the uncertainty of the hour of death, receive Holy Communion frequently, and with as great devotion, as if it were your last Communion,—the holy Viaticum.

Bordoni.

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

THE FALSE PROPHETS.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." Mt. vii, 15. Who are these false prophets? St. John gives an answer to this question, saying: "Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this is the spirit of God known: every spirit, that confesseth Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God: and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh, and he is now already in the world." I John iv, 1. Consequently, those who dissolve Jesus Christ, who attempt to destroy his kingdom upon earth—the adversaries of Jesus Christ—are the false prophets of whom we should beware. Let us now see who are these adversaries of Jesus Christ in our midst.

1. The first adversaries of Jesus Christ are *the enemies of faith.* For the Son of God descended from heaven, that he might teach men the true knowledge of God. "The Word was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him; and the world knew him not. He came unto his own; and his own received him not." John i, 9-11. Behold the false

prophets! The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it.

2. Jesus Christ has established his Church in order to spread the light of divine truth throughout the world. Therefore *the enemies of the Catholic Church* are false prophets also. Their number is exceedingly great. The world has seen this divine Sion for more than eighteen hundred years in full vigor and power, has seen within her the children of God walking in the faith and power of God. The world has been witness of the joy with which tender children and virgins have shed their blood for Jesus Christ, and of the superhuman strength of those valiant mothers who for the holy faith led their own children to the slaughter. The world has seen and admired the power of God in the holy solitaries, in the depths of the desert, in the Saints in every condition of life, and in the martyrs of Christian charity.

Beware of these false prophets, of these enemies of Christ and his Church. They come to you in the clothing of sheep, pretending to defend the rights of reason. In truth it is not reason that they defend, but the rebellious spirit which in Adam revolted against God.

3. In the third place, *the enemies of Christian life* are of the number of the false prophets. These are they who make their flesh and belly their idol, trampling publicly under foot the law of Jesus Christ. Catholic Christians should abhor the friendship of such men, and never open to them the sanctuary of their families. Much more dangerous are the writings composed and propagated by such persons. The ruin of souls caused by impure literature is so enormous that I feel myself wholly at a loss adequately to describe the extent of its fatal consequences. The vice of impurity has still a repulsive form, even in the eyes of the world. For this reason it is that the emissaries of the devil insinuate this deadly poison into the families under a seductive form—in the form of novels and romances.

4. False prophets are also they who pretend to adhere to the Christian faith, but cannot bear to see in their fellow-men a

truly Christian spirit, as it is manifested by frequent reception of the holy Sacraments, or by daily assistance at Holy Mass, etc. To this sort of men the words are addressed: "I know thy works; that thou art neither cold, nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." Apoc. iii, 15. These men consider themselves rich, whilst they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." V. 17.

Beware of these false prophets! Let them mock and laugh to scorn, when you are unwilling to join their infamous conversations, or to take your meals without a thought of Him to whom you owe them, like dumb brutes that do not give thanks, because they are not able, etc.

Peroration: Let us confess our faith openly in the midst of these many false prophets. Let the world revile us: the time of mocking and laughing will pass quickly; but after these days of tribulation "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall be falling down: and the powers that are in the heaven shall be moved. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." Mk. xiii, 24. And the elect shall reign with Jesus for evermore.

Bishop Ketteler.

VI.

ON HELL.

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire." In these words our Saviour makes known to us the final fate of the man who dies in sin, of the tree that bringeth not forth good fruit. When Jesus will pronounce the last sentence, he will say: "Depart

from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." Mt. xxv, 41. This is the horrible truth on which we will meditate to-day—the final fate of the sinner—hell!

1. I put in the first place the question: Is there a hell? This is a decisive question, about which to be in doubt or error, would be of fatal consequences.

a. I should, at the outset, remind you that the wicked—sinners—revile the belief in the existence of hell. For what reason? Our Saviour gives the answer: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved." John iii, 20. And again: "You are of your father, the devil; and the desires of your father you will do * * * When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof." John viii, 44.

b. In the Catholic Church it is an article of faith that there is a hell, and that hell is a place of eternal punishment. He who denies this doctrine is no longer a Catholic.

c. Christ himself has taught that there is a hell which will last forever.

The Son of God says: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Mt. xxv, 41. The Son of God says: "It is better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that cannot be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." Mk. ix, 42. The Son of God says: "These shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just, into life everlasting." Mt. xxv, 46. Vide Lk. xvi, 26.

2. *How can we comprehend this* hell—an everlasting punishment?

a. I readily admit that it is an inscrutable mystery. But we are surrounded by mysteries.

b. If there is an eternal separation of that which is good from that which is bad, there must be also an eternal separation of the just from the sinner. If hell be not an everlasting pun-

ishment, the sinner receives, as well as the just, an everlasting reward. What difference would there be between a virgin and a harlot; between St. Sebastian and Nero, between Gabriel and Lucifer? Besides, the will of the sinner will remain perverted forever, and therefore liable to punishment forever.

3. *What is hell?* I will only repeat the answer given by Holy Scripture.

St. John says: It is a "pool of fire and brimstone, where both the beast and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Apoc. xx, 9. The same Apostle says that it is a "pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death," wherein "the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their portion." Apoc. xxi, 8.

Our Saviour says that it is an "everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." Mt. xxv, 41. He calls hell "the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. xiii, 42. He repeats this a second time, Mt. xiii, 50.

Our Saviour says it is a place wherein the condemned are tormented in flames. For this is the pitiful language of Dives: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." Lk. xvi, 24.

Our Saviour says, it is a place where a worm gnaws that dieth not, and a fire burns that is not extinguished. Mk. ix, 46-48.

Our Saviour calls hell a place of exterior darkness: "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. viii, 12. He says, it is a place whose inhabitants burn. "If any one remaineth not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire; and he burneth." John xv, 3. What a picture of hell! Can words describe, or imagination conceive a fate more terrible?

The soul will be separated from God: "Depart from me"—

for ever—into a fire—into an everlasting fire—into a fire that penetrates our senses. "The Lord will give fire and worms into their flesh, that they may burn, and may feel for ever." Judith xvi, 21.

4. *Who will be cast into hell?*

Whoever dies in mortal sin. Such a one dies as an enemy of God, and as such cannot partake of the heavenly joys.

He who, contaminated with many sins, departs this life, has to suffer yet greater torments.

Peroration: How great should be our horror of mortal sin, which separates us from God, and transplants us into a place of unspeakable torments, all hope being taken from us! And how momentous is the hour of death, on which our eternity, life and death, depends! How great the danger to which the sinner is exposed, whose soul is defiled with grievous sins!

Bishop Ketteler.

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

THE EVERLASTING DWELLINGS.

In the Gospel of this day the Lord mentions the everlasting dwellings. "Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." These words, "everlasting dwellings," contain an ineffable consolation for poor wandering mankind. Let us consider what dwellings these are, and for whom they are destined.

I. WHAT KIND OF DWELLINGS ARE THESE?

Holy faith gives us information concerning everlasting dwellings.

1. *The sweetest peace reigns in them, as regards the body.*

a. There is no earthly burden.

Here below we have many cares and sorrows. "Great

labor is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial into the mother of all." Ecclus. xl, 1. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Mt. vi, 34. In the everlasting dwellings "they shall not hunger, nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor the sun strike them." Isai. xlix, 10. "They are in peace." Wisd. iii, 3. Therefore we pray for the souls of the departed: "Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord."

b. There are no afflictions nor tribulations.

Here below we suffer afflictions and shed tears. "The time of our life is short and tedious." Wisd. ii, 1. Afflictions are like a mighty torrent sweeping over the face of the earth and penetrating into every human dwelling.—In the everlasting dwellings "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more; nor mourning nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away." Apoc. xxi, 4.

2. *The sweetest peace, as regards the soul.*

a. There is no struggle.

Here below we are engaged in a continual struggle and combat. "The life of man upon earth is a warfare." Job vii, 1. "I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind." Rom. vii, 23. How trying and painful is in many cases this combat of the soul against world, flesh and hell!—In the everlasting dwellings we enjoy the final victory. "Grace and peace is to His elect." Wisd. iii, 9. There the soul has perfect dominion over the body.

b. There is no peril.

Here below we live in continual peril of perishing. "Let him that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall." I Cor. x, 12. Man is in danger of sin every day, every hour, after fifty and more years of a holy life.—In the everlasting dwellings, man has obtained his last end, and received the crown of perseverance, wherefore no loss of grace is to be feared. "The things which are not seen are eternal." II Cor. iv, 18. "Security is

delightful to every one, mostly to him who has been in great fear. After entering life everlasting, the consciousness of being safe, double the joy of that life." St. Bernard.

3. *The greatest joy reigns in them.*

Holy Scripture says: "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure." Ps. xxxv, 9. "I appoint to you, as my Father hath appointed to me, a kingdom; that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." Lk. xxii, 29. "The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him." I Cor. ii, 9. The same Apostle says that "our present tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." II Cor. iv, 17.

II. FOR WHOM ARE THE EVERLASTING DWELLINGS?

1. *Not for sinners.*

"There shall not enter into heaven any thing defiled." Apoc. xxi, 27. There shall not enter into it

a. The unjust. "Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God?" I Cor vi, 9.

b. The uncharitable. "He that loveth not, abideth in death." I John iii, 14.

c. The unbelieving. "He that believeth not, shall be condemned." Mk. xvi, 16.

d. Drunkards. Drunkards shall not possess the kingdom of God. I Cor. vi, 10.

e. The unchaste. "Without are the unchaste." Apoc. xxii, 15.

f. The slothful. "The unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness." Mt. xxv, 30.

g. Blasphemers. The revilers shall not possess the kingdom of God. I Cor. vi, 10.

Against every soul departing this life in the state of mortal sin the everlasting dwellings are for ever locked. "We confess that those who die in the state of mortal sin go forthwith to hell." (Conc. Florent. in decr. unionis.)

For whom are the everlasting dwellings?

2. *Only for the just.*

To heaven we are led

a. By unwavering faith. "Amen, Amen, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life." John v, 24.

b. By childlike humility. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a child, shall not enter into it." Lk. xviii, 17.

c. By a strenuous combat. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent bear it away." Mt. ix, 12.

d. By true justice. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Mt. xix, 17.

Peroration: Oh! let us forsake sin, and lead virtuous lives. Then they will receive us into everlasting dwellings.

Joseph Schuen.

VI.

THE FEAR OF GOD.

The parable of the unjust steward reminds us of the fear of God. It is a constant exhortation of Holy Scripture that we should walk and converse in this holy fear. It is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. cx, 10). Moses said shortly before his departure: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways?" Deut. x, 12. And St. Peter, the Moses of the New Covenant, writes: "If you invoke the Father, him who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to everyone's work, converse in fear during the time of your sojourning here." I Pet. i, 17. Let me speak to you on this virtue, that is the beginning of wisdom, and recall to your mind the motives that should induce us to fear God. Let us open the eyes of faith, and see *what is above, what is beneath, and what is within us.*

I. *What do we see above us?*

We are no longer, as the Jews, in the vestibule of the house of the Lord, but God has received us into the sanctuary of his family. "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, (Father). Therefore I am not to speak of the servile, but of the filial fear, that renders us cautious not to lose the grace and affection of our Father. This filial fear behooves us, when we lift up our eyes toward heaven.

1. You behold with the eyes of faith the Triune God; the Father who created you with the finger of his omnipotence; the Son who redeemed you with his precious blood; the Holy Ghost who sanctified you. Who is this God?

a. He is the Supreme Lord of heaven and earth. Earth and heaven will melt like wax, when he comes to judge the living and the dead.

b. He is the omniscient God. "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun." Ecclus. xxiii, 28.

c. He is substantial Holiness, and hates whatever is sinful. "In his angels he found wickedness." Job iv, 18. "Behold, among his Saints none is unchangeable, and the heavens are not pure in his sight. How much more is man abominable, and unprofitable, who drinketh iniquity like water?" xv, 15. God punishes the sinful creature with severe punishment, as is manifest from the reprobation of the sinful angels. Vide II Pet. ii, 4.

Who would not exclaim with the Psalmist: "Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear: for I am afraid of thy judgments?" Ps. cxviii, 120.

2. You behold hosts of angels surrounding the throne of God, who remained faithful in the time of probation. Together with these bright angelic choirs you behold a great multitude of Saints—a multitude which no man can number. (Apoc. vii, 9). They received their crown for great tribulations and virtues. Vide Heb. xi, 36-39.

"How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way, which leadeth to life; and few there are who find it!" Mt. vii, 14.

Should not such reflections cause a wholesome fear in our soul?

II. *What do we see beneath our feet?*

1 *The abyss of hell* yawns under our feet, "the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Apoc. xxi, 8); in which the wicked shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (xx, 10); an everlasting fire, exterior darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In this dreadful place we behold with the eyes of faith the reprobate angels, we hear Dives cry for a drop of water to cool his tongue. Lk. xvi, 24. All wicked men are in his society, "and the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever; neither have they rest day nor night." Apoc. xiv, 11.

2. *The flames of Purgatory.* There we behold the souls of the just tormented for small offences. They will not come out of this prison, until they have paid the last farthing.

3. We are in peril at any moment to be cast into either of these prisons. Let us then beware of both mortal and venial sins! "It is better for me," said Susanna, "to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." Dan. xiii, 23.

III. *What do we see within us?*

1. A life that may terminate at any moment. "All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen." Isai. xl, 6.

2. A precious soul, created according to the image of God himself, admired by the Angels and Saints, nursed by the Holy Church,—in great peril of ruin, in consequence of original sin, and of actual sins.

3. We see ourselves surrounded by a wicked world, by bad examples, and persecuted by the devil, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." Eph. vi, 12.

Peroration: Let us then live constantly in the fear of the Lord, without despondency or despair. "He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing, and shall not be afraid: for he is his hope. The soul of him that feareth the Lord shall be blessed," etc. Ecclus. xxxiv, 16-19.

Joseph Ehrler.

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

THE SINNER IN PRESENCE OF THE JUDGMENT.

The prophecy of Jesus concerning the fate of Jerusalem, is, according to St. Bonaventure, applicable to the sinner also, and describes the fate of the sinner before the judgment seat of God.

I. *The sinner will be encompassed by the multitude of his sins.*

If, during this earthly life, an evil conscience is the most cruel tormentor, a two-edge sword for the sinner (Ecclus. xxi, 4), he will feel its stings the most

1. At his departure from this life.

a. All self-delusions will vanish, when the fragile body breaks down, the world with its possessions disappears, and time will be no more. Ps. xli, 1, 2.

b. All terrors attack the soul of the sinner: his sinful past (II Mach. ix, 10, 11), his helpless present (Amos v, 19), and an inevitable and hopeless eternity.

2. At the approach of judgment when the sinner's conscience will be

a. Its own *witness*, because in the presence of divine omniscience it will understand how useless it is to tell a falsehood (Ps. xciii, 9), or to bring forth excuses (Job ix, 3), and how utterly impossible to conceal anything (Heb. iv, 14; Jerem. xvii, 10).

b. Its own *accuser*, as it will be obliged to make a sincere self-accusation concerning many faults and heinous crimes which were concealed in life. Rom. ii, 15.

c. Its own *judge*, as it will condemn the folly of its aberrations, the vanity of worldly attachment, the perversity of delaying conversion, etc., and it will itself approve the sentence pronounced by God. "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right." Ps. cxviii, 137.

II. *The sinner will be straitened by the severity of judgment.*

1. Jesus Christ to whom the Father hath committed all judgment (John v, 22), will, as God, avenge the insulted divine dignity because of contempt and ingratitude, and his grieved humanity, because the sinner refused to give alms, and committed so many unjust actions against his neighbor.

2. *As man.* He who was before the mild mediator and intercessor in behalf of the sinner, will be now the inexorable judge. Prov. i, 24-29.

3. *As Redeemer*, he will demand an account, because the sinner has scorned his precious blood, and has slighted the graces and means of grace offered to him; and because he has been the cause of the ruin of other souls. Isai. v, 4.

4. *As model* of a virtuous life he will convince the sinner of his own holy life, and confound him. Lk. ix, 26. "I know you not, whence you are." Lk. xiii, 25, 27.

III. *The sinner will be hurled flat to the ground by the most dreadful sentence pronounced against him.*

If Jesus Christ, by one word, made the band of men, and the servants, who had come to arrest him, fall to the ground (John xviii, 6), how great will be the despair of the sinner, when Jesus, appearing in his infinite majesty, pronounces sentence against him.

1. This sentence will be as dreadful as hell itself. Depart from me,

a. *Deprived* for ever of the beatific vision, of the inheritance of heaven, and of the most delightful society. "The wicked shall see, and shall be angry: he shall gnash with his

teeth, and pine away: the desire of the wicked shall perish." Ps. cxi, 10.

b. *Condemned*—the creature by its Creator, man by his God, the Christian by his Redeemer. "And they say to the mountains and to the rocks: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Apoc. vi, 16. Vide ix, 6.

c. *Cursed*—the soul, the body, all the senses and faculties. "He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him; and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him. And he put on cursing like a garment, and it went in like water into his entrails, and like oil in his bones." Ps. cviii, 18. Esau "roared with a great cry" because of being deprived of his father's blessing.

2. This sentence will be perfectly just, for the everlasting fire will be

a. Proportionate to the multitude of sins, and to the wickedness, knowledge, and position of the sinner.

b. The portion of the infidel and reprobate sinner only, who, as he was not willing to believe and reflect in time, ought to suffer in eternity.—He has prepared this fire himself; for God who atoned for his sins, did not prepare it for him, but for the devil and his angels, for whose sins He did not atone. He is now their associate, because he contemned divine mercy.

3. This sentence is irrevocable and unchangeable, as God and his attributes are unchangeable. No resistance is possible, no appeal admissible. "They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone."

4. It will be forthwith executed. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire." Apoc. xx, 15. Vide Lk. xvi, 22.

Peroration: Therefore have pity on your own soul (Ecclus. xxx, 24), and deliver yourself up to the bounty of God, who is anxious by his grace to draw you to himself; and you will not be obliged to fear the severity of the Judge of the living and the dead.

De la Rue.

VI.

DEATH IN SIN.

The prophecy of Jesus concerning the impenitent Jews, has been literally fulfilled. The same will be fulfilled in every impenitent sinner, in us also, if we should die in mortal sin. Think of it and tremble!

1. "Thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side."

a. This was fulfilled concerning Jerusalem. The Roman General Titus cast a trench about Jerusalem, so that no one could go in or out. Within, pestilence, starvation, war against one another; without, the infuriated enemy.

b. Behold your own fate, impenitent sinner, at the hour of your death! Your enemies, the reprobate angels, will compass you round. "All thy enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they have hissed, and gnashed with the teeth, and have said: We will swallow her up." Lament. ii, 16.

They will straiten thee on every side. They will persecute the poor sinner with many temptations, and present to his eyes all his sins in their heinousness and abomination. "Why shall I fear in the evil day? the iniquity of my heel shall encompass thee." Ps. xlviii, 6. How great will be your anguish! Wherever you turn your eyes, you find no help. Above you, the wrathful God; beneath you, the yawning hell; within you the gnawing worm of your conscience; around you your afflicted relatives; before you, death and God's inexorable judgment. "The lamp of the wicked shall be put out, and a deluge come upon them." Job xxi, 17.

2. "They shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee."

a. This was fulfilled concerning Jerusalem. For not only the walls of the city were leveled with the ground, but most of the inhabitants were destroyed by pestilence, hunger, or the sword.

b. The same will happen to you at the hour of your death. You will be taken from the earth by force, however much you may be attached to the earth, and with Agag you will say: "Doth bitter death separate in this manner?" I Kings xv, 32. In the same way you will be torn from your children, your thoughts, hopes, and aims. "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Lk. xii, 19, 20.

3. "They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone."

a. This was fulfilled in Jerusalem. The city was entirely destroyed, the walls were leveled with the ground, the rubbish was taken away, and the soil used for farming purposes, so that of the royal city no stone was left upon a stone.

b. The same revenge will come over you, impenitent sinner. Whatever you have heaped up like precious stones will go to ruin. You will be deprived of your earthly possessions, of the fruit of your good works, and of your resolutions, which you made but kept not. "If a man live many years, and have rejoiced in them all, he must remember the darksome time, and the many days: which when they shall come, the things passed shall be accused of vanity." Eccle. xi, 8.

Peroration: "The death of the wicked is very evil." Ps. xxxiii, 22. Therefore be converted to the Lord by penance and prayer, that it may be said of you: "He hath delivered his soul from going into destruction, that it may live and see the light." Job xxxiii, 28.

M. Faber.

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

CHRISTIAN HONESTY.

"O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men." Lk. xviii, 11. Behold the man who regards himself as perfect. "I fast twice in a week: I give tithes of all I possess." In the scale of eternal justice this honesty was nothing but chaff. He went down into his house, not justified. Who then is truly honest? He who possesses Christian honesty. Let us make this virtue the subject of our meditation.

PART I.

WHEREIN DOES CHRISTIAN HONESTY CONSIST?

Christian honesty consists

I. In the fulfillment of our Christian duties.

1. The honest Christian gives God what belongs to God:

a. The honor due to him. "Now to the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever." I Tim. i, 17. The honest Christian speaks with reverence of God. His behaviour in the house of God corresponds with God's awful majesty. He endeavors to promote Gods honor among men.

b. The adoration due to him. "Come, let us adore and fall down, and weep before the Lord that made us." Ps. xciv, 6. The honest Christian makes regularly his morning and night offerings. He takes a delight to go to church on Sundays and holidays, to pay homage from the depth of his soul to the Holy of Holies.

c. The love due to him. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." Mt. xxii, 37. The honest Christian proves his love toward God by keeping the commandments, and by enduring anything rather than commit a mortal sin.

2. The honest Christian gives his neighbor what belongs to his neighbor.

a. As Superior he is solicitous for his own. "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith." I Tim. v. 8. He has particular care of his children, guarding them against spiritual ruin.

b. When subject to others, he is obedient. "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them." Heb. xiii, 17.

c. He gives everyone what he owes him:

He is honest in business transactions. "Do not any unjust thing in judgment, in rule, in weight, or in measure." Levit. xix, 35.

He is friendly in conversing with his neighbor. "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, loving brotherhood." I Pet. iii, 8. Even when reviled, he has no bitter words.

He is benificent toward his afflicted brethren. "Do not forget to do good, and to impart: for by such sacrifices God's favor is obtained." Heb. xiii, 16.

Christian honesty consists

II. In fulfilling our Christian duties with the right intention.

1. Not for the sake of men. He who covets only the praise of men, his honesty has no value before God. "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." Mt. vi, 5.

2. But for God's glory. "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Col. iii, 17.

Such is Christian honesty. How widely different from this is honesty as understood by the world! This consists only in external decency, whatever may be the qualities of the heart.—Have we reason to feel easy about our own honesty?

PART II.

WHAT ARE ITS BLESSINGS?

Christian honesty is rewarded with great blessings.

1. It confers temporal advantages:

a. Consolation of the heart. The honest Christian is, in the first place, entitled to the promise made by our Lord: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you." John xiv, 27.

b. Happiness of families. A family in which Christian honesty reigns, is truly happy. All love one another; all assist one another.

c. Prosperity in worldly undertakings. God blesses them, as we see in the lives of Abraham and Job, and as our own experience teaches.

2. It makes us heirs of celestial goods.

"The just shall go into life everlasting." Mt. xxv, 46. There is no one in heaven unless on earth he exercised justice. "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and the unchaste, and murderers, and those that serve idols, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie." Apoc. xxii, 15.

J. Schuen.

VI.

EXTERNAL MANIFESTATION OF PRAYER.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray." Lk. xviii, 10. Both showed externally that they prayed. We also are taught to manifest by our external conduct our inner prayer, especially in church. Let us see why, and how, we should make this manifestation.

I. WHY SHOULD WE MANIFEST OUR DEVOTION EXTERNALLY?

1. Human nature demands it. God has disposed our nature in such a manner that we manifest the motions of our heart by words, gestures, and actions. When our heart is filled with confidence in, and reverence for, God, we are naturally inclined to give vent to these sentiments by our external deportment. Let us respond to the wise design of God in this regard.

2. Our absolute dependency on God demands it. In every moment of our life we cannot live but by God. "In him we

live, and we move, and we are." Act. xvii, 28. It follows that the body also, together with the soul, should announce the praise of the Most High.

3. Our own advantage requires that, by appropriate words, gestures, and actions, we should foster the inward devotion of the heart. For this divine flame is easily extinguished.

4. The edifying example we owe our neighbor is well effected by genuflexions, folding of hands, etc., because no one can perceive the inward devotion without outward signs.

5. The example of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, and the regulations of the Church.

II. HOW WE SHOULD MANIFEST OUR DEVOTION.

We may manifest our devotion in different ways, especially

1. By praying aloud, mostly at public devotions, for which St. Thomas assigns the following reasons:

a. In order that our devotion may increase. "The voice that strikes the ear, excites attention and acts as a spur to devotion." St. Augustine.

b. In order to serve God with body and soul, because we received both from God, and both need divine assistance. "Take with you words, and return to the Lord, and say to him: Take away all iniquity, and receive the good; and we will render the calves of our lips." Osee. xiv, 3.

2. By praying with our head uncovered. This is observed by men according to the exhortation of the Apostle: "The man, indeed, ought not to cover his head: because he is the image and glory of God." I Cor. xi, 7. This is observed out of reverence for God, and for the action of prayer, which thus appears as sacred. But the same Apostle says that it does not become a woman, to pray to God uncovered. The reasons are assigned I Cor. xi, 5-17.

3. By praying with our hands elevated and folded.

a. This is the natural attitude of man in prayer, as even gentiles understood. "We men elevate our hands to heaven, when we are to pray." Aristotle. "Our attitude during prayer

is this, that we pray our hands expanded toward heaven." Apulejus.

b. It was the accepted rule of the Jews. David prayed in this manner. "All the day I cried to thee, O Lord: I stretched out my hands to thee." Ps. lxxxvii, 10. In this manner prayed Moses on the top of the hill. "When Moses lifted up his hands, Israel overcame; but if he let them down a little, Amalec overcame." Exodus xvii, II. Solomon prayed in the same manner. III Kings viii, 22.

c. We pray after the same manner, following the exhortation of the Apostle: "I will that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands." I Tim. ii, 8. We do so as if to intimate our entire dependence on heaven, and our hope for help from there. "Arise, give praise in the night, in the beginning of the watches: pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord; lift up thy hands to him." Lam. ii, 19. At the same time we express our desire for God and our heavenly home. "I stretched forth my hands to thee: my soul is as earth without water unto Thee." Ps. cxlii, 6.

4. By bowing our knees. "Every knee shall be bowed to me." Isai. xlv, 24. This is done after the example of the Apostles in protestation of our entire subjection and obedience. and in order to appease the divine wrath. "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." During Paschal time, however, we say certain prayers in a standing attitude, in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord.

Bishop Wagner.

V.

MARY, IN HER EARTHLY SOJOURN, POSSESSED HEAVEN; AND NOW IN HEAVEN, SHE POSSESSES THE EARTH.

Mary died, surrounded by the disciples of her Son; her death was occasioned by ardent love and longing for the Beloved of her heart. Her blessed soul was led by her Son into the society of jubilant angelic choirs before the throne of God. Her body, which once encompassed the Lord of life and death, was not subject to the law of a sinful and accursed nature. It did not see corruption; but, reunited with her soul and glorified, was carried by holy angels into the eternal mansions. Ever since she has possessed heaven. She possesses the earth also, being queen of both heaven and earth. She would not, however, have possessed this ample dominion, had she not, while on earth, in some sense, possessed heaven. These two reflections may serve as the subject of our present meditation.

I. MARY POSSESSED HEAVEN ON EARTH.

The beatitude of heaven consists

1. *In the first place* (*a*) in the plenitude of grace, and (*b*) in the perfection of virtue according to every one's merits. In Mary these two conditions were realized even during her earthly sojourn.

a. The plenitude of grace. Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin, and was exempt from actual sin. In consequence of sin heaven is closed against those who are subject to it. But to Mary, heaven was open from the moment of her conception, because of her exemption from original sin.

Mary was full of grace, the Lord being with her. She is blessed among women. She was conscious of being full of grace, and exempt from sin. Hence her supernatural happiness in

earthly life. "My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Lk. i, 46.

b. Perfection in virtue. St. Bernard, St. Alphonse Liguori, and other Saints assert it to be more possible to exhaust the ocean, than to depict the riches of virtue and loveliness of the Blessed Virgin,—her ardent love of God, humility, purity, resignation, fortitude, etc.

Mary is the woman clothed with the sun. (Apoc. xii, 1)· In the splendor of her virtues she is to us a perfect model, a heavenly light illuminating the path toward our eternal destiny.

But if justice and sanctity confer so great happiness that the Just are glad in the Lord, and rejoice, and all the right of heart glory, (Ps. xxxi, 11,) Mary no doubt possessed heaven on earth.

2. *In the second place*, in the vision of God, in conversing with Him, and in the possession of Him. In both relations, Mary possessed the heavenly beatitude on earth.

a. The vision of God. Who could depict the joys of her heart when she became aware that she had conceived the Son of God in her virginal womb; when she embraced him for the first time; when she heard, for the first time, issue from his mouth the sweet name "Mother"; when she heard him announce the good tidings; when she saw him performing miracles, and going about doing good?

b. Joy in God, in conversing with Him, and in the possession of Him. Mary loved God with the most tender and ardent love. God-loving souls have ever considered it a great grace to suffer for and with Christ. So St. Augustine, St. Francis, St. Teresa, St. Lidwina, covered with sores as was this last, cried out: "O Lord, this is my delight, that thou visitest me with afflictions." To heroic mothers, such as the mother of the Machabees, and St. Felicitas, when they beheld the torments of their children, the certainty of their eternal glory was the source of great consolation. To Mary, the fruit of redemption—the salvation of mankind, and the glorification of her Son—which she saw shining through the cloud of afflictions, was the sweet consolation in her deep sorrows.

II. MARY IN HEAVEN POSSESSES THE EARTH.

1. *The Saints partake of the dominion of Jesus Christ.*

a. Jesus Christ has all power in heaven and in earth. Mt. xxviii, 18. "He must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet." I Cor. xv, 15. "And the seventh angel sounded the trumpet: and there were great voices in heaven, saying: The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever." Apoc. xi, 15.

b. The Saints reign with Christ. They partake of his dominion on earth, and regard the welfare of the members of the kingdom of Christ on earth as their own affairs, presenting our prayers and sacrifices to God, and interceding for us with God. A part of their reward and happiness consists in this, that God hears their petitions in our behalf. "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not adored the beast, nor his image, nor had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Apoc. xx, 4. "They shall reign for ever and ever." xxii, 5.

2. *Mary, the queen of all the Saints, partakes more completely of the dominion of Jesus Christ, and possesses consequently, in heaven, the earth.*

a. She is the mother of the glorified Jesus, as she was once the mother of the persecuted and crucified Jesus. The relation of a mother to her son, of a bride to the Holy Ghost, of a daughter to the Father, is far superior to the relation of a handmaid, although in her humility that is the position she assigns to herself.

b. Therefore the faithful pay her homage as the queen of the world.

The veneration of the Blessed Virgin has been at all times distinguished by the Church from the adoration of the Most High; but it is also held superior to the veneration of the other Saints.—This veneration is universal (Catholic) and intimately connected with the adoration of God. We add regularly the *Angelic salutation* to the *Lord's prayer;* we adore three times in

the day the Incarnation of God, and in doing so, we say three times the *Hail Mary*. Innumerable are the monuments of the veneration which is paid to Her.

Mighty princes recognized her as their queen, built churches in her honor, and placed their kingdoms under her protection. St. Henry the Emperor built, in her honor, more than a thousand churches: James I, king of Arragon, about two thousand churches and chapels. St. Louis of France fed in her honor, every Saturday, the poor, in his own palace. Charlemagne, St. Stephen of Hungary, and other kings, offered her, as a present, their realms. Surely, in heaven she possesses the earth.

Peroration: Mary was then, on earth, in the possession of heaven, because of her graces and virtues; and now in heaven she possesses the earth. The children of the Church devote to her their affections and veneration. She reigns with her Son through her intercession. Let us venerate her by invoking her with confidence; yet more, by imitating her virtues, that she may be justified in imploring for us the crown of justice. Especially let us strive to possess heaven on earth, by loving her divine Son.

Joseph Matheis.

VI.

MARY A QUEEN.

"Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her." Lk. x, 42. Mary was on this blessed day elevated above angels and archangels to take possession of the glory prepared by the Father for his daughter, by the Son for his mother, by the Holy Ghost for his spouse. In order to express her glory, we call her the queen of heaven, the queen of angels, of the Patriarchs, of the Prophets, etc. *Mary a Queen*, be then the subject of our meditation.

I. THE SPLENDOR OF HER DOMINION.

The splendor of her dominion is truly royal.

1. *Her royal throne.*

Bethsabee of the Old Covenant sat on a throne on the right hand of the king, her son. III Kings ii, 19. Thereby the throne of Mary is prefigured. "The place on the right hand of God is assigned to her." St. Ildephonse. "Thou, O Lady, art in the possession of beatitude, more exalted than all the rest—Apostles, Patriarchs, Prophets, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins—more exalted than all the Saints of God." St. Anselm.

2. *Her royal crown.*

Holy Scripture frequently speaks of the honors of the Elect. "Golden crowns on their heads." Apoc. iv, 4. How bright and glorious must these crowns be! Holy Scripture calls them "crowns of life," James i, 12; "never-fading crowns of life." I Pet. v, 5. In comparison therewith the most splendid earthly crowns are but playthings. How splendid must be the crown on the head of the Blessed Virgin! Her crown shines among the crowns of the Saints as the sun shines among the stars. "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." Apoc. xii, 1.

3. *Her royal mansion.*

St. John writes: "The city itself was pure gold, like to clear glass." Apoc. xxi, 18. It is the Celestial Jerusalem, a city of incomprehensible beauty, worthy of God. Mary occupies the most elevated place in this city. Who is able to describe the mansion of this royal Virgin?

The splendor of her heavenly dominion is then exceedingly great. Oh! let us praise this venerable Virgin! "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem; thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honor of our people." Judith xv, 10.

II. THE EXTENSION OF HER KINGDOM.

1. *It extends, in point of space,*

a. Throughout heaven. The Angels and Saints honor Mary as their queen. As they sing the praises of the Most High, so also do they chant the praises of the Mother of God.

b. Throughout the earth. "Whatsoever is subject to

God, is subject to Mary also." St. Bernardine. In a special manner she is the queen of the Catholic Church. She never ceases paying homage to Mary.

2. *It extends in point of time*

a. To the past. It has existed since the day of her assumption.

b. To the present. It exists up to this day in heaven and in earth.

c. To the future. It will last on earth to the Day of Judgment, and in heaven for all eternity.

To the dominion of Mary we may consequently apply the words of the Prophet uttered in admiration of the dominion of God: "How great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of his possession! It is great, and hath no end: it is high and immense." Baruch. iii, 24, 25.

Let us rejoice at the greatness of our Lady Queen, and consider it a great happiness to be subjects in her kingdom.

III. THE NOBILITY OF HER HEART.

1. *A nobility conferred by God himself.*

a. The Triune God entered into the most intimate relation with Mary. She is the daughter of the eternal Father, the mother of the divine Son and the bride of the Holy Ghost.

b. This treble nobility elevates Mary above the heaven of heavens, near to the throne of God. The Most High himself is not able to impart a higher nobility to a creature. "Mary has received an infinite dignity. God was able to create a greater world, and a greater heaven; but he is not able to create a greater mother than the Mother of God." St. Bonaventure.

2. *A nobility manifested by her deeds.*

a. Her kindness and bounty are inexhaustible. All graces pass through her hands.

b. Her magnanimity is unlimited. "Mary's bounty surpasses all our misery." St. Bonaventure. It is especially toward sinners that she exercises an unlimited magnanimity. "She is the tower of David, because the sinner takes there his refuge

and finds safety. She is the ark of the Covenant, because she reconciles the sinner with God. She is the gate of Paradise, because she opens it to the sinner." St. Bernard.

Peroration: Oh! let us foster a great reverence for, and a great veneration of, the Blessed Virgin. Let us also in all our needs and sorrows betake ourselves for refuge to her. Ye who are in the state of sin, you have special motives to put your trust in our Lady of mercy.

J. Schuen.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

V.

OATHS AND PERJURY.

The healing of the dumb and deaf man reminds us of the duty we owe to God of gratitude for the healthy condition of our senses. The right use of them is no doubt the best manner of showing our gratitude. Of all the members of our body, the tongue—the wonderful organ of speech—is the most abused by sins of various kinds, of which the most horrible is perjury. As this atrocious crime is of frequent occurrence in our days, it will not be out of place to explain from the pulpit the significance of an oath, and the malignity of the crime of perjury.

I. SIGNIFICANCE OF AN OATH.

1. Some heretics maintain that the Christian religion forbids the taking of an oath. They support their perverse views by the words of our Saviour: "You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord. But I say to you not to swear at all * * * But let your speech be, Yea, yea; No, no; for whatever is more than these, cometh from evil." Mt. v, 33-37. In these words, our Saviour does not absolutely prohibit an oath under any circumstances, but only warns his disciples against levity in swearing, at the same time he reminds them that the sacred sanction of an oath was introduced in consequence of

the perverseness of human nature. For God himself, and the Apostles, did not shrink from making use of this solemn pledge of veracity.

2. Because an oath is a consequence of the perverseness of human nature, its employment is almost as old as mankind. Ever since sin came into the world, the simple word of man has been mistrusted, and God himself has been invoked as a witness on solemn occasions. This means of offering a solemn pledge of a person's truthfulness was in use, not only among the Gentiles, but also among the Jews, and is customary among all Christian nations. It is even regarded as an act of divine worship.

3. The Jews took an oath with great solemnity and under imposing ceremonies, in order that they might be reminded even externally of its significance. Our Holy Church has also prescribed a great many regulations on this subject, wherever she could exercise her influence on the laws and statutes of nations. The external levity with which, in our days, oaths are administered is to be deeply lamented; and to it may undoubtedly be ascribed, in great measure, the frequent occurrence of perjury amongst us.

4. Under any circumstances the word of the Lord must be obeyed: "Thou shalt swear: As the Lord liveth, in truth, and in judgment, and in justice." Jerem. iv. 2. *In truth.* You may not take an oath, when you have the slightest doubt as to the truth of what you are about to swear to; and when you take a promissory oath, you must be firmly resolved to keep your promise. *In judgment.* Without absolute necessity a true Christian may not swear, but only when required to do so by legal authority. *In justice.* A true disciple of Jesus never swears to do what is evil, or not to do what is good.

II. THE CRIME OF PERJURY.

1. Perjury is a public lie told with premeditation in the presence of God and men—a lie which, in most cases, causes great damage to our neighbor. "A lie is a foul blot in a man." Ecclus. xx, 26. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."

Prov. xii, 22. The features of God should be resplendent in our soul—the image of God! But God is the eternal, infallible, truth, because he is the light, and there is no darkness in him. The devil is a liar, and the father thereof. Therefore every liar does not resemble God, but Satan. "You are of your father, the devil. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own. For he is a liar, and the father thereof." John viii, 44. Man is therefore ashamed of being looked upon as a liar, and covers one lie by another in order not to be known and branded as a liar. But the perjurer tells his lie shamelessly in the sight of God and men.

2. Perjury destroys the last means of preserving truth and faith among men. Human society is established upon truth and faith; noble foundations, which, as far as in him lies, the perjurer destroys. No other means are left, in many cases, to establish truth.

3. Perjury is a mockery of God's omniscience, sanctity, and justice. The perjurer knows that "the eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun." (Ecclus. xxiii, 28); he knows that God, who is substantial holiness, abhors any lie; he knows that God carries the lightning flash in his hand to punish any one who does sin; and yet he dares to call upon God to be the witness, and, as it were, upholder of his lies.—Who would dare to summon an honest man to declare, before a judge, a lie to be a truth? Yet He who is truth and sanctity itself is invited by the perjurer to be an attesting witness of his truthfulness.

4. He who commits this crime, solemnly renounces God, and calls down His vengeance upon him. "So help me God!" says the perjurer, and in these words he protests that he will have no part in God, unless he tells the truth. By his own free choice he assigns a place for himself on the left, before his death and the decision of the Judge.

5. Is it not self-evident that the all-righteous God must punish this atrocious outrage upon His truth and holiness with signal vengeance? We know by history and experience that God frequently sends sudden death, and other temporal punishments

upon the perjurer, and thus fulfills his threat pronounced by the prophet Zacharias: "And the Lord said to me: This (the flying volume that you see) is the curse that goeth forth over the earth. It shall come to the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and with the stones thereof." Zach. v, 3, 4. If God commanded (Leviticus xxiv, 14) that a blasphemer of the Jewish church should be stoned without the camp, what will be the fate of a blaspheming Christian? "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die." V. 16.

Yet the full measure of divine wrath will be poured down upon the perjurer only in eternity. "No dagger inflicts as serious wounds as perjury; and no oath kills in so cruel a manner as a false oath." St. Chrysostom.

Peroration: What we have been insisting on regarding oaths and perjury recalls to our memory the great truth, that religion and faith are the foundation of the natural order of things. Without faith in God, and salutary fear of him, the temporal life of the individual cannot be led in peace and justice; nor can the commonwealth prosper, unless religion is fostered by its members. The infidelity of the masses is the principal cause of the many perjuries in our days. As for us, we will not swear but "in truth, and in judgment and in justice." Jerem. iv, 2.

J. Ehrler.

VI.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD BY HIS WORKS.

When the children of Israel saw the works that Jesus did, they exclaimed: "He hath done all things well." We also live in a world of wonders, and "by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby." Wisd. xiii, 5. "The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by things that are made: his eternal power, also, and divinity, so that they are inexcusable." Rom. i, 20.

I. BEAUTY OF THE UNIVERSE.

"Who shall be filled with beholding his glory?" In these words the son of Sirach begins his beautiful reflections on the creation (Ecclus. xlii, 26–xliii, 37). Cf. Ps. xviii, 2–7.

1. *The great extension of the universe.* The earth appears exceedingly large in its continents and oceans. Yet its size is insignificant in comparison with the sun; and the sun again is of small dimensions in comparison with many fixed stars.—The number of the fixed stars, comets, and planets, cannot be estimated, and their respective distances in space are so great that man stands in awe and amazement before Him who called this vast creation into being.

2. *The great variety of creatures:*

a. Of rational creatures:—the angels, distributed in nine choirs, are innumerable. "Thousand of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him." Dan. vii, 10. Then, there are more than 1000 millions of men living at present. Who can count the numbers of all the generations since the day of creation? And all are distinguished from one another by features, faculties, and talents.

b. Of irrational creatures. There are innumerable living creatures on earth, in the air, in the water, and innumerable inanimate beings.

3. *The utility of all these things:*

a. Of the sidereal bodies:—sun, moon, etc.

b. Of animals and plants; for food and raiment, etc.

c. Of inanimate things:—iron, fire, air, etc.

4. *The order in the world.*

a. Moral order, established by the law written in man's heart, and by the family life.

b. Physical order in the powers and laws of nature:—the law of *gravitation*, the mechanical, electric, chemical, optic, acoustic laws; the change of months and seasons. The five senses of the human body.

We have every reason to say with Ecclesiasticus: "Who shall be filled with beholding his own glory?"

II. INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THIS TRUTH.

"By the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby." Wisd. xiii, 5.

1. Our intellect draws the following conclusions :—

a. As no creature can be the cause of its own existence, and as no creature can come into existence by chance, it follows that there is a Creator, absolute, eternal.

b. The moral order, as it is manifested by reason and conscience, presupposes a holy and just God who engraved these fundamental principles in our conscience.

c. The admirable order in all things postulates a most wise being who established this order.

Can there be a piece of art without an artist, a watch without a watchmaker, an organ without an organbuilder.

2. *Only a perverse will can deny God;* a will perverted

a. By folly and malignity: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God." Ps. xiii, 1.

b. By *pride*, when a man will not acknowledge a supreme Lord over him, as Pharao of old.

c. By a *vicious life.* The slave of his own passions wishes that there were no holy God. The wish is the father of the thought.—Besides God gives such men up to the desires of their hearts. Rom. i, 24.

Peroration: Let therefore visible nature be to us a continual remembrance of the Creator, a ladder reaching up to heaven, a book written by the hand of the Almighty, in which we may read every day, that we must lead such a life, that the knowledge of the holy and just God may not inspire us with confusion and terror, but with true joy and holy desire.

Stapf.

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbor as thyself." Lk. x, 27. God could give us no easier commandment than to love him above all things. In order to prove this assertion, I will give you a complete instruction on the love of God.

I. THE QUALITY OF THIS LOVE.

1. God does not demand of us that we should love him alone, to the exclusion of all creatures, but only above all creatures. He demands the *first place* in our hearts. "He that loveth father or mother *more than me* is not worthy of me." Mt. x, 37.—If a king should require his subjects to love him more than the dust in the street, no one would deem such a desire too hard. But all created things are, in comparison with God, nothing but dust.

All inclinations, however, for creatures, in order to be lawful, and not to be obstacles to divine love, ought to be in conformity with God's commandments.

2. We owe to God a love of preference, without exception, i. e., we must be resolved never to offend him by a mortal sin, even at the risk of our own life. But there is a love of tenderness, a sensible love, which is not under our control. This kind of love is not included in the above commandment. Thus a mother may love her child, a bride her spouse, with greater tenderness than they love God. Yet if they are determined never to offend God for the sake of their child or spouse, the affection of their will for God is evidently greater than for the objects of their more sensible love. When the great Spanish hero Perez Gusmann defended the city of Tariffa against the attacks of the Moors, his son, who had made a sally, was taken prisoner. The

Moors promised to set him at liberty, if his father would surrender the besieged city; but if he would not accept their proposal, they threatened to inflict on him an exquisitely cruel death. The hero preferred to fulfill his duties toward his country and king than listen to the soft voice of parental affection. Such is the love that God demands of you.

II. MOTIVES OF OUR LOVE TO GOD.

As our love for God is not based on blind inclination, but is the product of our intellect and will, enlightened and strengthened by divine grace, it has freely chosen motives for its cause. We distinguish divers motives.

In the first place, our love may spring from our hope of reward, or from gratitude for benefits received. When we are determined, in consideration of past and future benefits, to remain the friends of God, we love him above all things.

In the second place, the motive of our love may be, because he is, as the Supreme Good, infinitely amiable in himself.

Although either of these motives induces the soul to love God above all things, yet the latter is by far the most perfect, and causes what we call the *perfect love* of God. Alexander the Great said of two of his friends: "Krates loves the king, Hephaestion loves Alexander," the intended meaning of these words being: "Krates loves me, because I bestow benefits upon him; Hephaestion, because he esteems my worth, and wishes me well." If you love a musician for the sake of his charming art, or a physician, because he alleviates your bodily ailment, not for themselves, your love is imperfect.

III. THE MANNER IN WHICH ACTS OF PERFECT LOVE ARE MADE.

1. Are we obliged to love God with perfect love? We are not obliged at all times; yet it is our solemn duty to make acts of perfect love from time to time. It is quite certain that every one is obliged to make such acts when he comes to the use of his reasoning faculty, and when he is to depart this life. Besides, it is quite certain that the same duty obliges us at many other

times of our life, although we cannot precisely determine these times. It is very advisable to make these acts of perfect love at least on Sundays and Holidays.

2. As to the manner, you must never forget that it is not a work of your tongue, but of your heart.—It is, however, not required that the infinite and absolute amiableness of God should be the exclusive motive of our love, but only the principal motive. We are not obliged to banish hope; but to this motive of hope we should add, as our principal motive, the infinite amiableness of God in himself.

IV. MEANS OF ACQUIRING A PERFECT LOVE.

In order to make an act of perfect love, it is necessary to know how amiable God is; for we cannot love a good, unless it is known to us. That we may obtain this indispensable knowledge of God, we must comply with the following three conditions.

1. *We must banish sin from our soul*, because sin is that dark cloud which hides from us the divine countenance, according to the prophet Isaias: "Your sins have hid His face from you." Isai. lix, 2. God, the eternal Truth, does not impart himself to impure souls. "The Truth does not manifest itself to the impure." St. Bernard. Therefore forsake impurity, enmity, hatred; keep holy the Lord's Day. If not, you will never obtain a true knowledge of God, since St. Paul says in express terms: "The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God." I Cor. ii, 14.

2. *We must pray for this knowledge of God*, the true wisdom. "If any of you ask wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James i, 5. Therefore, St. Bernard tells us, that the knowledge of God is better sought and found by prayer than by learned disputations. "O Lord!" you may say with St. Anselm, "teach me to seek thee; and show thyself to me, when I seek thee. For I cannot seek thee, unless thou teachest me; nor can I find thee, unless thou showest thyself to me."

3. *We must meditate on the divine perfections.*

We are filled with reverence and devotion for a Saint by reading his admirable life and virtues. In a similar manner our hearts are inflamed within us when we meditate on the mighty deeds and the glorious perfections of our God. For this purpose, no great science is required, as the lives of many Saints clearly show. (The Orator exhorts his hearers, in fervent language, to make regularly a meditation, and to learn to read of God in the old, beautiful book written by God himself,—the visible universe.)

Peroration: Let us then make continual efforts to obtain the love of God by purity of morals, by fervent prayer, and regular meditation on the divine attributes. For the greater appear to you the perfections of God, the firmer will be your resolution to prefer Him to all creatures. When great honors and riches were offered by Diocletian to St. Clement, bishop of Ancyra, if he would renounce Jesus Christ, he was so grief-stricken by the mere effort of the Emperor to compare these perishable things with the grace and friendship of his Saviour, that without giving an answer, he forthwith wept bitterly. Oh! wonderful effects of divine love! O Lord, enkindle in our hearts this celestial fire, that we may weep at least because of having offended thee so many times for the sake of contemptible things.

J. B. Campadelli.

VI.

THE POISON OF BAD READING.

"How readest thou?" Lk. x, 26. A certain lawyer enquired after the way leading to heaven. Jesus said to him: "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" I should like to put the same question to you: "How readest thou?" or rather: "What readest thou?" A flood of infernal literature is sweeping over the length and breadth of the country, and men read, and imbibe the poison into their souls. Poison? Poison indeed! Permit me to say a few words on this subject. It is a poison (1) delightful to taste, but (2) of a deadly consequence.

I.

There is in nature a poison that tastes like honey. Such is the poison of bad books.

1. *They flatter human passion.*

Our hearts are exceedingly prone to evil. "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth." Gen. viii, 21." Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured." James i, 13. Passion is like a hidden spark that is enkindled by one breath to become a consuming fire. Such is especially the effect of bad books.

a. They flatter human pride.

They despise faith as a folly, obedience as ridiculous, and proclaim man as his own absolute master. The proud heart devours these and similar doctrines with avidity.

b. They flatter man's sensuality.

The greater number of bad books excite by carnal passion, love-stories, immoral incidents, and the narration of sexual excesses. The mind of the reader is soon captivated by unchaste representations of his imagination.

2. *They flatter by the most enticing means.*

"The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." Lk. xvi, 8. Moreover, they do not shrink from employing the most abominable means, in order to reach their aim. The dark deeds of vice are represented in the most attractive manner. "An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips; but in his heart he lieth in wait, to throw thee into a pit." Ecclus. xii, 15. How sweet this poison is you may judge from the avidity with which books of this description are read, from morning till midnight, or even throughout entire nights, to the neglect of the most sacred duties. Novel-reading mania—that destructive disease—is soon contracted.

II.

Of bad books we may repeat the description given by the Holy Ghost of a deceitful woman. "Her lips are like a honeycomb dropping; and her throat is smoother than oil. But her

end is bitter as worm-wood, and sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down into death; and her steps go in as far as hell." Prov. v, 3-6. Sweet as is the poison of bad books, it is at the same time a deadly poison.

1. The heart is little by little alienated from heaven.

a. Faith is shaken.

Faith demands an humble acquiescence of our intellect to divine revelation, although we do not comprehend the revealed truths. But by irreligious books religion is ridiculed, and represented in a false light; by which a lamentable impression is left upon the mind of the reader, especially of the young. Perhaps you know this from your own sad experience.

b. Virtue is undermined.

Virtue demands many sacrifices. If you read books in which piety is represented as folly, and a virtuous life is reviled, it would be, in view of our human misery, a miracle of rare occurrence, if you did not come at length to doubt the worth of virtue.

Thus bad reading produces the same detrimental effects upon man's soul as poisonous mildew produces upon blossoms. The heart is alienated from heaven, and instead

2. It becomes a prey of hell.

a. Infidelity takes possession of the heart.

When faith is undermined, there remains but one step to avowed infidelity. Experience bears testimony.

b. Vice is triumphant.

When the love of virtue is once lost, vice will surely enslave the reader. "By reading bad books man becomes vicious. The reader learns from them that which is evil." St. Augustine.

Peroration: "Ye parents, forbid your children peremptorily to read romances; for they leave in young people impressions that deprive them of all devotion, and drive them from sin to sin." St. Alphonse Liguori.—Ye, my young friends, keep away from the flame that will set your souls on fire; imbibe not the poison that will destroy your spiritual life.—All ye members of this congregation, if you be of good will, and have the welfare of your fellowmen at heart, do not suffer under your roof bad books or papers.

J. Schuen.

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

THE LEPERS.

"As he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers." Lk. xvii, 12. Of Jesus Christ we read the grand eulogium: "He went about doing good." His life was an uninterrupted succession of charitable works. Thus he is represented to us to-day as cleansing ten lepers. When they lifted up their voice, saying: "Jesus, master, have mercy on us!" he said: "Show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed." Let us direct our attention to these lepers

1. Before their healing.
2. After their healing.

PART I.

In the lepers before they were cleansed, we behold

I. *An exceedingly great misery.*

1. "As he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers." These few words express an immense misery. Their malady was

a. Exceedingly loathsome.

The whole body was covered with sores, by which the face was more disfigured than by small-pox. Vide Leviticus xiii.

b. Very painful.

The leper felt an intolerable itching throughout his entire body; single limbs turned putrid, and fell off. Burning pains pierced the very marrow of the bones.

c. Very contagious.

It spread from victim to victim with great rapidity. Hence the precaution: "Whosoever shall be defiled with leprosy, a the time that he is a leper and unclean, he shall dwell alone with out the camp." Levit. xiii, 44, 46.

2. *Leprosy is a figure of sin.* Sin is a leprosy of the worst kind.

a. Sin deforms body and soul.

A dreadful curse lies even upon the body of the sinner. How horrible are the devastations caused by impurity! This vice disfigures the face of its slaves. How disgusting is it to look at a habitual drunkard!—Who could measure the curse wherewith the soul of the sinner is laden! "They are corrupt, and are become abominable in their ways." Ps. xiii, 1. The holy angels turn away from them their holy faces.

b. Sin burns the sinner.

"Woe to the wicked unto evil, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isai. iii, 11. Sin burns like poured-out fire in the conscience. It burns in the abominable consequences which it causes even in this world.

c. Sin is a contagious malady of the soul.

"Speaking swelling words of vanity, they allure in desires of the flesh of riotousness." II Pet. ii, 18. How often does innocence fall a victim to sin!

II. *We hear them cry out for help.*

1. They lifted up their voice, saying: "Jesus, master, have mercy on us." Let us admire these lepers

a. In their confidence.

The fame of the wonderful deeds of the Lord had reached even the solitude wherein they dwelt, and given them confidence, which increased, when they beheld the divine mildness and majesty radiating from his countenance.

b. In their fervent prayer.

With unshaken confidence in the kindness and power of Jesus, they asked to be cleansed. Their petition was a model of humility ("They stood afar off,") and of fervor. ("They lifted up their voice.")

2. The sinner, if desirous to be cleansed from his leprosy, must also take refuge in Jesus. "There is no salvation in any other." Act. iv, 12. He alone is Redeemer of the world, his

Sacred Blood cleanses the souls. Rom. v, 18. Apoc. v, 9. The sinner must, therefore,

a. Trust in Jesus. "Have confidence; I have overcome the world." John xvi, 33.

b. Pray to Jesus with the lepers: "Jesus, master, have mercy on me!" pray with humility and fervor.

III. *What they were commanded to do.*

1. "And when he saw them, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests." According to the Law, (Levit. xiii) it was incumbent on the priests to declare whether the leprosy was healed or not; and their sentence was decisive.

2. Jesus says to every sinner: "Go, show thyself to the priest." The priesthood of the New Covenant has received the power to forgive sins—to cleanse the sinners from their leprosy. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." John xx, 23. Therefore the duty is incumbent on us to disclose our disease to the priest that he may cure it.

PART II.

After their healing, we behold

I. *Gratitude on the part of one.*

1. "And one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks: and this man was a Samaritan."

a. He glorified God with a loud voice. He did not content himself with concealing his gratitude in his heart.

b. He fell on his face. He who is truly thankful never thinks he has done enough.

2. The sinner ought to be also thankful, when his leprosy has been cleansed, and he is again a child of God. He ought to be thankful

a. With his whole heart.

The benefit is infinite. He is saved from eternal perdition, and entitled to the possession of heaven.

b. During his whole life.

He can never render sufficient thanks. "Give glory to the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever." Ps. cxi, 1.

II. *Ingratitude of the nine.*

1. "And Jesus answering, said: Were there not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return, and to give glory to God, but this stranger." How abominable was their conduct!

2. Many sinners, when they are cleansed, act in a like manner.

a. They return no thanks. No sooner are they absolved, than they leave the church, and hardly ever remember the great benefit received.

b. They even abuse the benefit. There are a great many sinners who relapse into their former sins on the very day of confession. On the same day they return to the same perilous society. On the same day they are contaminated with impurity again.

Oh! that our conduct may not be that of the nine!

J. Schuen.

VI.

SINCERITY IN THE CONFESSIONAL.

Jesus demanded of the ten lepers as the condition of healing them that they should show themselves to the priests. He demands the same condition in the New Covenant, if we want to be cleansed from the leprosy of sin. Yet there is a great difference between the priests of the Old and of the New Covenant. The priests of the Old Covenant could only declare that leprosy was healed, whilst the priests of the New Covenant have the power to cleanse the lepers. But their power to bind and to loose presupposes sincere confession, since the priest is bound to act, not arbitrarily, but in judgment. Let me therefore exhort you to be sincere before your father confessor.

I. CONFESS YOUR SINS TO HIM AS YOUR JUDGE.

1. *Confession is necessary.* If God had conferred on the priests only the power to *release*, it might be sufficient to ask remission of sins, without making a particular confession. But since He conferred upon them also the power to *retain* sins, He made them judges, with authority to decide, whether in those particular cases offered to their decision, the sins confessed should be released, or be retained. By selecting therefore a priest as your judge, you take the duty upon yourself of accusing yourself before him.

2. *The accusation ought to be sincere.* "We should be ashamed to commit a sin; but we should not be ashamed to confess our sins." St. Augustine. And St. Francis of Sales warns us against suspecting, in the confessor, the Pharisee, who despised in contrite Magdalene the sinner, instead of admiring the penitent. Contrite confession commands even respect. There is joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance. "The just is first accuser of himself: his friend cometh, and shall search him." Prov. xviii, 17.

3. *The confession should be humble.* We should confess our sins with shame, but should not conceal them out of shame. The shame created by the devil, and leading to the devil, is widely different from the shame caused by divine grace and the horror of sin, which urges to self-accusation, and leads to God.

4. *The confession ought to be complete.*

a. It should include all mortal sins. Every single sin causes eternal perdition, wherefore every confession is invalid and sacrilegious, in which one mortal sin, not only concerning the kind, but also the number, has been concealed by one's own guilt.

b. It should comprise such circumstances as change the nature of sin. To every sinner the words of Josue are addressed: "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and confess, and tell me, what thou hast done: hide it not." Josue vii, 19.

II. CONFESS YOUR DOUBTS TO HIM AS YOUR TEACHER.

The necessity of revealing at least our grave doubts to the priest, appears

1. From the *imperfect knowledge* of Christians in general. Many have never received a complete instruction. There are points of doctrine on which the minister of the Gospel cannot speak publicly. Besides there are cases of conscience, for the solution of which professional science is required.

2. From the *fatal consequences* resulting from concealing such doubts. He who in grave doubts of conscience does not seek advice, and acts at random, commits sin. "For all that is not of faith, (in accordance with our conscience,) is sin." Rom. xiv, 23. You entertain, for instance, grave doubts about the righteousness of certain business transactions; or about the sinfulness of certain occasions; or about certain occurrences in conjugal life,—manifest your doubts to the priest, who is commissioned to teach all in the pulpit, and every individual soul in the confessional.

III. MANIFEST YOUR BAD INCLINATIONS TO HIM AS YOUR PHYSICIAN.

Sickness and sin,—physician and priest,—bear a great similarity.

1. *We must call upon both for aid:*

a. In time. Many die a premature death, because they neglected bodily evils that seemed not to be alarming in the beginning.—Do not defer to make use of the remedy of confession; few and little sins are easier removed.

b. With confidence. Confidence facilitates even the cure of bodily diseases. In order to have the health of our soul restored, confidence in the divine mercy, and in the efficacy of the Sacrament is required.

2. *We must disclose the evil.*

Before a physician attempts to heal a bodily disorder, he makes the diagnosis. For this purpose he investigates

a. The disease itself.—The disclosing of the disease is a figure of sacramental confession.

b. The nature of the organism in general, as the circulation of the blood, the appetite, etc. The physician of our soul

should be acquainted not only with our sins, but also with our bad inclinations. For this purpose he has to put questions.

3. *We must conscientiously take the prescription ordered us.* There are sick persons who cannot be healed:

a. Those who are *self-willed*, pretending to know more than the physician; who demand of him to be guided not by their malady, but by their own headstrong opinion. Self-willed penitents act in a like manner.

b. Those who are *disobedient*, not taking the medicine prescribed by the physician, nor observing the other regulations laid down by him. How could the most skillful physician heal such?—Of what avail is it to confess your sins, unless you are resolved to amend your life, to make good use of grace, and to observe the exhortations of your confessor? Have you not, on the contrary, sufficient reason to fear that you commit a new sin, —the sin against the Holy Ghost?

Peroration: You should always reflect that your confessor is your spiritual *father*, who loves sincerely your soul. Therefore be not indignant, when you find him particular in exploring the state of your conscience. You understand yourself that as judge, teacher, and physician, he may have cause to enquire after many things. On the contrary, you should be thankful to him, and facilitate the fulfillment of his duty.

Jais.

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

LOSS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The Lord exhorts us to seek first the kingdom of God (Mt. vi, 33), assuring us that, if we seek, we shall find (Mt. vii, 7), but also threatening: "Yet a little while I am with you * * You shall seek me, and shall not find me." John vii, 33. The greatest treasure for men is the kingdom of God, the realm of virtue and beatitude; which we therefore ought to seek above all things. We ought to seek it; for the kingdom of God may be lost, unless we seek it with ardent desire.

I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD MAY BE LOST.

1. *The kingdom of God has its distinct epochs.*

a. As concerns the whole human family, its first epoch opened in Paradise; its epoch of restauration opened with the Redemption; the fruit of which was received *anticipando* during the four thousand years between the fall of the First Adam and the birth of the Second Adam.

b. In the life of the individual, we may also distinguish divers periods: Baptism, childhood, first Confession and Communion, Confirmation, mature age, etc.

2. *As concerns divers nations*, the kingdom of God *before the birth of Christ* was lost by the primitive nations in the course of time, and by the Jews after a period of four thousand years, during which time it was preserved for them by the exceedingly great mercy of God. After the birth of Christ, we see the kingdom of God travel from land to land. Many countries, in which it once flourished, are now again buried in the darkness of infidelity and heresy. Nations, once the admiration of the Christian world for their virtue, science, and art, are now in a state of stagnation.

3. *As concerns smaller communities*, we may also safely say,

that the kingdom of God wanders from town to town, from congregation to congregation, from house to house, from person to person. Here we witness lukewarmness, there zeal; here holy Jerusalem rejected, there impious Rome sanctified instead; here Judases rejected, there Mathiases and Pauls chosen in their place; here a mercenary hireling perverts Christians into heathens, there a Catholic missionary converts heathens into Christians.

Examine the condition of this congregation,—of your own house,—of your own soul! Have things become better or worse?

II. THROUGH WHAT CAUSES THE KINGDOM OF GOD CAN BE LOST.

1. *By indifference as regards religion.* He who does not esteem the precious pearl will either not seek it, or will employ no means to prevent its loss. The principal means for its preservation is to make conscientious use of its graces. "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Mt. xxi, 43. Cf. Rom. xi, 22.

2. *By pride,* which God ever resists. Pride is manifested

a. As *infidelity.* "Thou standeth by faith: be not high-minded, but fear." Rom xi, 20. Pride prevents man from bowing before God, and subjecting himself to Him.—God makes known his mysteries to little ones.—Infidelity frequently swells into hatred of religion. What wonder, if he loses his religion who acts as its enemy.

b. As *vanity,* when man's mind is so much absorbed by earthly things. He who enthrones the vanities of this world in his heart, to him the *Crucified* must needs appear as a "stumbling-block and a folly."

3. *By immorality.*

a. Immorality leads man to practical infidelity. "You cannot serve God and mammon." In a like manner we say: You cannot serve God and the flesh,—charity and envy; patience and wrath; Christ and Belial. Immorality, attachment to earthly things, idolatry of the flesh, produce in men doubt, then denial, and at last the reviling of the just God.

b. Immorality induces God to withdraw the kingdom of God from the sinner, as a deserved punishment. The Apostle after enumerating various sins, adds: "They who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God." Gal. v, 21.

4. By *neglect of the means* which preserve the kingdom of God, to-wit:

a. Growth in the knowledge of religion. "Faith cometh by hearing." Rom. x, 17. Neglect of solid religious instruction has been one of the principal causes of the rapid spread of Protestantism, and of infidelity, up to our days. The preacher may exhort his audience to support the missions among the heathen nations. "How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him, of whom they have not heard? And how can they preach unless they be sent?" Rom. x, 14. And how can they be sent unless they be supported?

b. Means of grace, especially prayer, Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Sacraments, in order to be strengthened in the performance of good works, and to secure the grace of God, and the intercession of Mary and the other Saints.

c. Wacthfulness, especially concerning the books and journals we read.

Peroration: Seek then the kingdom of God, but also his justice, without which you cannot preserve it. "Strive to enter by the narrow gate: for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able."

Bishop Galura.

VI.

GROWTH IN VIRTUE.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." Mt. vi, 28. The Church is the garden of God, the faithful in their divers positions and degrees of perfection are the flowers in this garden. However distinct from one another flowers may be, it is common to them all, that they *grow*. We must also grow in

knowledge and virtue. I propose to speak to you on this growth of the true Christian.

I. NECESSITY OF GROWTH IN VIRTUE.

1. *We must grow in virtue*, i. e., the number of our good works, and the zeal of virtue must increase.

a. This is demanded by the natural process of spiritual development. As a healthy body naturally strives to attain its full vigor and strength, so does also a healthy soul. Her life must be manifested by noble activity, in which her true life rests.

b. Without growth in virtue we remain children from a spiritual point of view, as we do not obtain the end of our existence. "The days of the sinner are empty days." St. Ambrose. A pious old man, when asked about his age, answered, Forty years, giving the following explanation: I was born seventy years ago; but I cannot count the first thirty years, because I did not devote them to virtue.

2. *We must never come to a stand-still*, but must always go forward.

St. Gregory compares the soul to a boat that takes its course up stream. As soon as the oars are at rest, it will go down the stream.

3. *We must not go backward*, since relapsing into the old sins is

a. Foolish, as it is a recession from our goal and frustrates our former efforts.

b. Dangerous, for "the last state of that man is worse than the first." Mt. xii, 45. Relapsing into sin forfeits divine grace, and the relapser becomes feeble, wherefore it is difficult for him to rise again.

4. *We must strive for perfection*, every one of us, God himself being our pattern. "Be perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect."

II. MANNER OF SAID GROWTH.

"Consider the lilies, how they grow." In the same manner as the flowers, we must also grow. Flowers grow:

1. *When they strike deep roots.* "Some of the seed fell upon the rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture." Lk. viii, 6. The roots of growth in virtue are: faith, self-knowledge, and humility.

2. *When they are kept free from weeds.* "I passed by the field of the slothful man, and by the vineyard of the foolish man. And behold, it was all filled with nettles; and thorns had covered the face thereof: and the stone-wall was broken down Which, when I had seen, I laid it up in my heart: and by the example I received instruction. Thou wilt sleep a little, said I thou wilt slumber a little; thou wilt fold thy hands a little to rest. And poverty shall come to thee as a runner, and beggary as an armed man." Prov. xxiv, 30-34. In a similar manner beggary will come to your soul also, unless you shun bad society.

3. *When they remain in the same place.* Frequent transplanting impedes the growth of flowers, and causes them sometimes to perish. Frequent change of a confessor, of devotional practices, of spiritual reading, and of the vocation of life, impede growth in virtue. "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called." I Cor. vii, 20. "I beseech you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called." Eph. iv, 1.

4. *They grow imperceptibly*, not suddenly, but by little and little. "The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward, and increases even to perfect day." Prov. iv, 18. Do not desire for extraordinary things. Jesus himself grew in age, and wisdom, and grace before God and men. If you do not perceive your daily progress in virtue, become not despondent: who sees the lily grow?

5. *They lift up their crown and chalice toward heaven.* In all our works let us direct our mind toward God, to fulfill his holy will; our desire, to praise him; our intention, to offer up to him all our thoughts, words, and deeds.

6. *They grow continually*, at every moment, until they reach their full size. Let us make good use of every moment of

our life, and persevere to the end. "Let nothing hinder thee from praying always; and be not afraid to be justified even to death: for the reward of God continueth for ever." Ecclus. xviii, 22.

Peroration: Blessed are we, if we are flowers of the above description in the garden of the Church. God will one day transplant us into the garden of heavenly Paradise, to bloom in eternal glory, as it is written of Henoch: "Henoch pleased God, and was transplanted into Paradise." Ecclus. xliv, 16.

Manoel Bernardes.

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

MOMENTOUS HOURS OF OUR LIFE.

The hour of death had struck for the young man at Naim. It will once strike for every one of us, perhaps sooner than we may expect. The beatings of our heart have marked off for us the past moments of our life, and will shortly have marked off the remainder of them also. Of the many hours of our life there are some of greater importance than others. I propose to speak to you of the most momentous among them.

I. *The hour of our childhood.*

It is past—that blessed time, the time of innocence and of the purest joys undimmed by the sorrows of life.

1. We must return to the spirit of childhood. "Amen, I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. xviii, 3. We must return (*a.*) to the forfeited purity of heart, by penance; (*b.*) to the humble faith of the child; (*c.*) to the filial confidence, leaving our cares to our Father in heaven; (*d.*) to the singleness of heart, that knows no deceptions.

2. We must beware of scandalizing the little ones—a crime

against which Jesus has solemnly warned us. Mt. xviii, 6. The higher we value the innocence of children, and the deeper sorrow we feel because of its loss, with so much greater care we should endeavor to preserve this treasure in the souls of children.

II. *The hour of temptation.* The struggle against the wicked spirits, the world, and our own flesh, is often exceedingly fierce. Yet we must never abandon ourselves to despondency.

1. Remember the price that is at stake. What are worldly pleasure, and all the allurements of sin in comparison with peace of conscience, and joy of the heart; with God, heaven, eternity?

2. Remember the help furnished by God. The example of the just is before us, the grace obtained by prayer and the sacraments gives us strength.

III. *The hour of afflictions.*

1. Many are the afflictions of life. The earth is one large hospital; a vale of tears.

2. The greatest of all afflictions is sin. The most burning tears are those shed over the loss of innocence; the greatest loss we can suffer is the loss of God and heaven.—In other afflictions you may console yourselves by the remembrance of Divine Providence; but when you have fallen into sin, what is left to you but tears and self-reproach?

3. Let afflictions be to you a source of merit for heaven; and, by sincere penance, strive to deliver yourselves from sin.

IV. *The hour of joys.*

It would be ungrateful to deny that God has prepared for man many joys, even on earth. But many a wanderer on earth does not know these true joys prepared by God.

1. Many are enticed by false joys,—joys of honor, of riches, of sensuality; but these joys are as soap-bubbles.

2. There are also true joys, caused by the aspect of this wonderful world, reflecting the bounty of God. The noblest joys are those perceived by meditating on religious truths, by receiving the Holy Sacraments, by prayer, works of charity, and even

by tears of penance. Jesus calls blessed those who are adorned with virtues, whilst he pronounces woe on the worldly minded.

V. *The hour of death.*

A dreadful hour! We should make our preparation for the approach of this hour, by reflecting often on the following truths:

1. Death is certain; and the separation from all earthly things is certain. For this reason, it is foolish to seek with anxiety for the things of this world.

2. The hour of death is uncertain. I know not when, where, in what state, death will meet me. Therefore I ought to watch, and to be prepared for it at any time. To defer my penance to so uncertain an hour would be very foolish, dangerous, wicked, and fatal.

3. The hour of death is the most momentous of all the hours of our life. Eternity depends on it. I should, therefore, often reflect on this hour!

4. "For me to die is gain," we may say with the Apostle, if, indeed, we are justified in saying also with him: "For me to live, is Christ." If so, death will be the end of all tribulations, the beginning of everlasting joys, the hour of rest.

VI. *The hour of eternity.*

1. *Eternal!* What does it mean? Time is no more. If Cain were to have shed one tear only during the space of one thousand years, how many thousands of years would be required before his tears would fill the space of the ocean? If a bird were, every thousand years, to carry away one grain of sand, how long a period of time must elapse before all the sand on the face of the earth were carried away! Yet even at the end of such periods of time eternity would not have advanced one step.

2. Eternity is two-fold. As the sound of the same bells may at different times create in our hearts sadness and joy, so the hour of eternity is to the sinner as the knell of everlasting death, earned for perishable pleasures; whilst it is a festival peal to the just, who by short tribulations purchased everlasting, ineffable, joys.

VII. *God's hour,* to which all other hours must be referred. Such hours are:

1. The hour of redemption—that blessed hour for which the nations were longing during four thousand years, and which we should always remember with profound gratitude, and with the purpose of amendment.

2. The hour of grace, by external visitations and inner inspirations. Let us never frustrate them, that the Lord may find no cause to weep over us, as he wept over Jerusalem, that did not know the days of visitation.

3. The hour of divine worship, of the sermon and of the offering of the tremendous Sacrifice, which hour, so rich in blessings, has just called us together. Oh! that it may not pass, without having been to us an hour of salvation.

Peroration: Let us then listen to reason, conscience, and revelation. Let us remember death, and lead such lives as it behooves those who may die at any moment. With great speed revolves our globe through the universe, and we with it. That is the speed of time. Therefore let us redeem the time. The Angel lifted up his hand to heaven, and he swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no more. Apoc. x, 5, 6.

Jarisch.

VI.

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

"And now glorify thou me, O Father, with the glorfiy which I had with thee, before the world was." John xvii, 5. From the one miracle that Jesus wrought at Naim, the attendants at the funeral drew the inference: "A greater prophet is risen up among us; and God hath visited his people."—We know and believe that Jesus of Nazareth is more than a prophet, that he is the only-begotten Son of God—God as the Father. This faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian religion. He who rejects this truth cannot be saved. For this rea-

son, the most atrocious assaults of our enemies are directed against this fundamental Christian doctrine. And as they have the effrontery to deny that this doctrine is contained in Holy Scripture, I will show you how utterly untrue is such an assertion, so that you may be strengthened in your holy faith. I say, Jesus Christ himself has declared that he is God, and has demanded the belief in his divinity of his disciples and of the Jews. Therefore we must either consider him as a liar and blasphemer; or we we must fall down before him, and adore him as our God and Lord.

In the first place I call your attention to those passages of Holy Scripture where Jesus asserted his existence previous to his temporal birth.

1. In the Gospel according to St. John, chapter vi, we read that Jesus fed 5,000 men with five barley loaves and two fishes. In Capharnaum, to which town the multitudes had followed him, the Saviour warned them not to follow Him on account of the meat which perisheth, but to labor "for that which endureth into everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you." vi, 27. When the Saviour said to them: "Moses gave you not bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven," they exclaimed: "Lord, give us always this bread." V. 32, 34. Thereupon he told them of what bread he was speaking. "I am the bread of life"; and "I came down from heaven." V. 35, 38.

And how did the Jews understand his words? It is manifest from their answer: "The Jews then murmured at him, because he had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven. And they said: Is not this Jesus the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then said he, I came down from heaven?" V. 41-42. The Jews murmured at him, because he asserted to have existed and dwelt in heaven, before he was born of Mary.

They were right, if Jesus was only man; they were wrong, if he was God. Hence the duty was incumbent on our Saviour to use an unmistakable language. But far from extenuating his

words, he commenced that sublime discourse, wherein he asserted repeatedly: "I am the bread of life." "This is the bread descending down from heaven." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." "This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and died. He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever." V. 48, 50, 52, 59.

Let us now draw the conclusion:

The Jews interpreted these words in the sense, that Jesus asserted himself to be more than man, that he attributed to himself existence before his birth of Mary, that he claimed to be of heavenly descent. But Jesus confirmed this understanding. Consequently, if Jesus were man only, he would have led the Jews and his disciples astray, and he would be no teacher of truth.

2. Jesus taught the same truth in the temple, when he had that memorable discourse with the Jews, recorded by St. John, chapter viii.

He said: "Amen, amen I say to you, if any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever." Thereupon the Jews were struck with great indignation, saying: "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself?" It became now the duty of our Saviour to declare whether he was a man, zealous for the honor of God like Abraham, or greater than he. Ambiguity would have been betrayal of truth. And Jesus answered: "Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it and was glad." The Jews then said to him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old; and hast thou seen Abraham?" And Jesus said to them: "Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am." Then they took up stones to cast at him. V. 56-58.

3. Clearer yet are the words spoken by our Saviour when he uttered that sublime prayer in the presence of his disciples.

He said that he had not received his being at his temporal birth like the rest of men, but that he had lived as God with the Father from all eternity. "This is life everlasting that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii, 3. In these words he declares himself to be equal to his heavenly Father. He then continues: "I have glorified thee upon the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee, *before the world was.*" V. 4, 5.

Jesus speaks evidently of two natures, the divine and human nature: the divine that possessed divine glory before the creation of the world; the human that was to be glorified, henceforth.

4. Let me, in conclusion, quote the words of St. Paul (Philip. ii, 5-11), in which he asserts precisely the same as our Saviour in the Gospel according to St. John. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery himself to be equal to God, but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men, and in the shape found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."

The Apostle says expressly that Jesus Christ had attributed to himself the divine nature, that he thought it no robbery himself to be equal to God; and that in the name of Jesus the knees of all creatures should bow, as in the name and majesty of the Father.

I draw now the following conclusion: The most heinous crime, the crime of the devil, is for a creature to claim the homage due to God alone. But Jesus Christ repeatedly attributed to himself divine perfections, and claimed divine homage. He

declared to his disciples and before the Jews that they owe him this homage, and that without this faith they could not be saved. Consequently Jesus Christ is true God. If he were not, the heavy charge of the Jews would be true, that he blasphemed God; nay he would be the worst of men. Yet the adversaries of the divinity of Jesus Christ do not venture to impute to him bad morals; on the contrary, they praise him as the wisest and holiest of men, whereby they involve themselves in contradiction.—As for us, we will bow our knees in the name of Jesus, and confess his divinity before the whole world.

Bishop Ketteler.

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

"God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." John iii, 16. Jesus proved by his many miracles, one of which is the subject of to-day's Gospel, that what he said of himself, is the truth. What then did Jesus say of himself? Last Sunday I advanced a few arguments, to prove that Jesus himself asserted, again and again, that he is the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father. I propose a continuation of this subject to-day.

1. In his *discourse with Nicodemus* Jesus said: "No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man, who is in heaven." John iii, 13.

In these words, Jesus makes the following assertions: (*a.*) He descended from heaven. (*b.*) He will ascend into heaven again. (*c.*) He is still in heaven. These assertions admit of no sense whatever, unless we concede that Jesus spoke of his two natures, the divine and human nature. In his divine nature he descended from heaven, that he might take human nature; he

did not, however, leave heaven. And he will ascend into heaven in his human nature also.

Jesus Christ continues, in his discourse: "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him. He that believeth in him is not judged; but he that doth not believe is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness, rather than the light, for their works were evil." John iii, 16-19.

In these words, Jesus not only teaches that he is the only-begotten Son of God, but also that faith in his divinity is the foundation of all our hopes, and that the lack of this faith is the infallible cause of our reprobation.

2. *Objection.* The adversaries of the divinity of Jesus Christ have at all times objected, that, although Jesus Christ calls himself the Son of God, it by no means follows that he ascribes to himself a divine nature. One of his Apostles asserts, "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. viii, 14.

I could meet this objection by merely quoting the words of St. Paul, who says: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made by a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv, 4. We are sons, adopted sons by Jesus, who, consequently, is not an adopted, but the only-begotten Son of the Father.

I will, however, answer it more at length; the more, as I shall thereby be afforded an opportunity of explaining to you the doctrine of the divinity of Christ.

a. In the first place let me remind you of the words of St. Paul, Heb. i, 1-3, that you may judge yourselves whether he calls Jesus Christ the Son of God in the same sense, as he calls us sons of God. "God having spoken on divers occasions,

and many ways, in times past, to the fathers by the prophets: last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world: who being the splendor of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high." Heb. i, 1-3.

St. Paul wrote to Christians of Jewish descent, who were still attached to their Jewish ceremonies, sacrifices, and priesthood. The Apostle took pains to convince them of the divinity of the Christian sacrifice, and of the High-Priest of the New Covenant. For this purpose, he begins at once to exalt the dignity of Jesus Christ, of whom he says, that he is (1) more than a prophet; (2) that he is heir of all things, as the Psalmist had prophesied Ps. ii, 8; and as Jesus Christ himself had announced Mt. xi, 27; xxviii, 18.

After having thus spoken of the human nature, he continues speaking of the divine nature, saying that by Him God made the world, (Cf. John i, 3); and that he is the "splendor of his glory," light from light; "the figure of his substance," i. e., consubstantial with the Father; "upholding all things by the word of his power," i. e., by his almighty will, so that without him, all things would fall back into nothingness.

It is He who makes purgation of sins, who has loved us unto the death of the Cross.

b. The Jews had been deprived of the right to inflict capital punishment, wherefore "the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death." Mt. xxvi, 59. They made great efforts to adduce a cause by which Pilate the Roman prefect might be induced to pronounce sentence of death against Jesus. But "they found not, though many false witnesses had come in. And last of all there came in two false witnesses, and they said: This man said: I am able to destroy the temple of God, and in three days to rebuild it." When Jesus said nothing to this charge, the high-priest said to him: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou

tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God." What did the high-priest mean by the expression *Son of God?* Evidently he meant it in the sense of the true, substantial Son of God; else it could not have been the object of a charge against Jesus. Further, we must consider that Jesus, being asked by the legal authority, had the duty to speak in unmistakable terms, and to correct misapprehensions, if any existed. They adjured him by the living God. He knew that the high-priest and the council put this question, because they supposed, that he had made himself equal to God. And what did Jesus answer? "I am: and you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Mk. xiv, 62.

In what sense the high-priest and the council understood the words of Jesus, we see from what happened. "Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed: what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you? But they answering, said: He is guilty of death." Mt. xxvi, 65.

The Jews pretended to have found Jesus guilty of blasphemy, uttered in the above words; wherefore demanding of Pilate to sentence him to death, they supported their demand in these words: "We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die; because he made himself the Son of God." John xix, 7. (This law is recorded Levit. xxiv, 14-16.)

Oh! that the infidels of our days would learn from the Jewish high-priest and the council to take the words of Jesus in the sense that he connected with them! We must either fall down and adore Jesus, or cry out with the Jews: Crucify him, crucify him. We must either confess and adore him as our God, or detest him as the worst of men. There is no evasion left.

c. Again, we see from the Gospel of St. John, Chapter x, in which sense the Jews understood Jesus, when he called himself the Son of God, and in which sense Jesus wanted to be understood.

When Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch, the

Jews who surrounded him said to him: How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them: "I speak to you, and you believe not: the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me. But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice; and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall snatch them out of my hand. That which my Father hath given me, is greater than all: and no man can snatch it out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father are one."

These words establish as clearly as words can the divinity of Jesus Christ. He promises life everlasting. He attributes to himself equal power with the Father. He says expressly: "I and the Father are one."

That the Jews understood his words in this sense is evident from the fact that they took up stones to stone him (V, 31). And for what reason? "For a good work," they say, "we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God!"

Under such circumstances, the slightest ambiguity on the part of Jesus would have been a crime. What then did he answer? "Is it not written in your law: I have said, you are gods? If he call them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken, and the Scripture cannot be made void: do you say of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." V. 34-38.

These words, far from tending to explain away what Jesus had first asserted, only confirmed it the more strongly. And so thought the Jews, for the Evangelist adds: "They sought, therefore, to take him; and he escaped out of their hands." V. 39. Neither could they have taken them in any other sense. His

argument is this: "If Holy Scripture calls *gods* those who were only men, but who, for a time, held the place of God as judges in Israel, how can you reproach me, for calling myself *God*, and *Son of God*, since I do not merely occupy the place of God, but the Father hath sanctified and sent me into the world, and since I do the same works that the Father does, and thus prove that the Father is in me, and I in the Father, or, what is the same, that I and the Father are one?"

Peroration: There is no salvation but in faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, whilst the dreadful sentence of condemnation will be pronounced against the unbeliever. "He that believeth in him is not judged: but he that doth not believe is already judged; because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." John iii, 18. Let us, therefore, fall down before the Son of God, and adore Jesus, in whose name every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell.

Bishop Ketteler.

VI.

DROPSY A FIGURE OF AVARICE.

Dropsy is a disease which, in general, attacks only those of an advanced age. In a similar manner, from indifference to God and celestial things, and attachment to earthly goods, arises avarice—a vice to which many fall victims, especially in advanced years. *Cum vita crescit habendi amor.* Allow me to invite your attention to the similarity existing between these two diseases, the one of the body, the other of the soul,—dropsy and avarice.

I. SIMILARITY BETWEEN DROPSY AND AVARICE.

They are similar

1. In the thirst occasioned by both.

A dropsical person is tormented by an insatiable thirst.—He who is enslaved by the vice of avarice, is ever desirous of accumulating wealth. He sets a higher value upon earthly possess-

ions than upon God and eternity.—He is not conscientious regarding the means of making money. Fraud, usury, and even perjury, are not detested by him, if by these crimes he can increase his riches. "Nothing is more wicked than the covetous man. There is not a more wicked thing than to love money; for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale." Ecclus. x, 9, 10.—His desire cannot be sated. "The eye of the covetous man is insatiable in his portion of iniquity: he will not be satisisfied till he consume his own soul, drying it up." Ecclus. xiv, 9.

2. In the sufferings occasioned by both:—

a. Want of rest and joy.—"Avarice is a cruel master: he gives his slave no rest." St. Gregory of Nyssa. "You shall serve strange gods day and night, which shall not give you any rest." Jerem. xvi, 13. When Achab could not buy the vineyard of Naboth, he turned his face to the wall, and would not eat. The covetous sinner finds no rest. "Be not anxious for goods unjustly gotten: for they shall not profit thee in the day of calamity and revenge." Ecclus. v, 10.

b. Pains throughout the whole body. The dropysical person suffers from anxiety of the heart, pains in the head, and swelling of every limb.—The avaricious man suffers in his heart. "For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." Mt. vi, 21. He suffers in his head, which is filled with innumerable cares and projects. He suffers throughout his whole body; for he is ever complaining. "We wearied ourselves in the way of the iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways; but the way of the Lord we have not known." Wisd. v, 7.

3. In the dangerous character of the respective disease. Cases of dropsy are very difficult to cure; and if cured, there is great danger of relapse. A complete cure is seldom effected. Most cases terminate fatally. So it is with avarice.

a. It is difficult to be cured. As the victim has chosen for himself an idol, he has no desire for the true God. The love of money has taken possession of his heart; and he hates to hear of the necessity of restitution.

b. Should the avaricious man be converted, there is the utmost danger of his relapsing into his former sins.

c. Avarice frequently causes premature death. A niggardly neglect to provide for the necessary wants of the body, for the sake of hoarding up money, and over-anxiety of mind as well as body, from the same cause, and not unseldom the direct judgment of God often bring the miser to an untimely end. "He that hateth covetousness, shall prolong his days." Prov. xxviii, 16.

d. Avarice causes everlasting death. "The covetous shall not possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. vi, 10. "They who would become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For covetousness is the root of all evil." I Tim. vi, 9. The despair of Judas.

II. DEATH THE DELIVERER FROM BOTH DISEASES.

He who suffers from dropsy, is in most cases delivered from his miserable condition by death only.—Fatal would it indeed be if the avaricious man were to wait to that hour. Death may however effect his deliverance during lifetime. By continual meditation on the four last things, it is possible for the miser to recover, before the death of his body, even from avarice, the life of his soul.

1. *Death and the grave warn us to despise earthly goods.* "The senseless and the fool shall perish together; and they shall leave their riches to strangers; and their sepulchres shall be their houses for ever." Ps. xlviii, 11. What is the value of those things which we have to leave very soon, and all of which others must take possession of, except our coffin.

2. *The judgment warns the avaricious to tremble on account of their possessions.* For they provoke God,

a. By their injustice and hard-heartedness, which are often the cause of sins crying to heaven. How will they be able to answer?

b. By the false confidence which they place in their goods. Their idol has not only forsaken them, but will even increase

their confusion and responsibility. "Their silver, and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord." Sophonias i, 18. Absalom who was proud because of his hair, perished by it. In a similar manner, all those things in which the avaricious trusted, will only serve to augment his terror.

3. *Eternity teaches us to covet unfailing goods.*

For in the next world we are in need

a. Of true merits. But that which the avaricious has accumulated, will provoke the divine wrath, since the miser promoted neither the honor of God, nor the welfare of his fellowmen. St. Bonaventure compares therefore the avaricious to certain animals that will profit no man before their death, but after death furnish lard for the surviving.

b. Of lasting merits. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not dig through, nor steal." Mt. vi, 20. "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich towards God." Lk. xii, 20. Cf. Mk. viii, 36.

Peroration: The leech, when filled with blood, will not vomit it out, unless you bestrew it with salt. If we frequently meditate on death and judgment, this meditation will be to us as salt, causing us to reject the foulness with which we are laden, and to return to a healthy condition of soul. Thus will death be, indeed, to us the best of physicians.

Venedien.

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

The question of Jesus, If David called Christ his Lord, how is He his Son? cannot be answered but by the assumption that He is God and man.—I have endeavored in my two last sermons, to show you how positively and unambiguously Jesus declared himself to be God, and how, consequently, every one is placed in the alternative of considering Jesus of Nazareth to be either God, or a blasphemer. Because, however, of the immense importance of the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and because it is often asserted by unbelievers, that Holy Scripture is at least not clear on that point, I will to-day invite your attention to some other passages of the Holy Bible, by which the above doctrine is abundantly confirmed.

I. JESUS ATTRIBUTES TO HIMSELF DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE.

Jesus ascribes to himself divine omnipotence in healing body and soul, and in raising the dead to life.

How widely different is the manner in which miracles were performed by St. Peter or St. Paul and by Jesus! St. Peter said to the lame man: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And when all the people stood amazed, Peter hastened to give the honor to Jesus, saying: "Ye men of Israel, why wonder you at this? or why look you upon us, as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus. And his name, through the faith of his name, hath made this man strong." Act. iii, 6, 12, 13, 16.

When St. Paul had healed the lame man in Lystra, and the people took him and Barnabas for gods, they, rending their clothes, ran among the people, crying out: "O men, why do ye these things? We also are mortals, men like unto you." Act. xiv., 14.—As lovers of truth, they could not act otherwise.

Not thus does Jesus work! He does everything in his own name. When the leper said unto him: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." "Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will. Be thou made clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Mt. viii. 2.

When the centurion confessed His omnipotence, Jesus did not rend his garments, but praised him, saying: "Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel." Mt. viii, 10.

When the Jews sought to kill him, "because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal to God," Jesus answered: "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life; so the Son also giveth life to whom he will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men may *honor the Son, as they honor the Father*. He who honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father who hath sent him." Jesus claims the same honor with the Father, for which purpose all judgment is committed to Him. John v, 18, 21-23. When he said to the penitent woman: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," they that sat together at table began to say within themselves: Who is this that forgiveth sins also? The Lord far from extenuating his words, said to the woman: "Thy faith hath made thee safe: go in peace." Lk. vii. 48-50.

When some of the Scribes, who had heard Jesus say to the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee!" were thinking in their hearts: "He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins, but God only?" He proved instantly by a miracle, "that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Mk. ii, 5-12.

But it is time that I should bring these observations to a conclusion. Were I to quote every evidence our Lord afforded of His divinity by word of mouth, and by his actions, I should have to adduce whatever he either did or taught. All his acts and words rest on this one truth.

II. THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLES.

Clearly as we have seen that the Apostles understood their

Master to ascribe to himself the divine dignity, I will nevertheless recall to your recollection three other remarkable testimonies which I have not before alluded to.

1. The first of these I would adduce is the testimony of Thomas, who when he saw the marks of the instruments of torture in the risen body, exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God!" and whose confession of his divinity Jesus confirmed, saying: "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." John xx, 27-29.

2. St. John says in express terms, that he had collected the testimonies concerning Jesus Christ, for the purpose of proving his divinity. "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in his name." John xx, 30.

Thus St. John concludes his Gospel. And how does he commence it? He expresses in a few words all that can be said of the divinity of Jesus Christ. He says of him:

He is 'the Word of God.'

He 'was with God in the beginning.'

This 'Word is God.'

'All things were made by him.'

He is 'the Life, Light, and Truth.'

By him 'every man is enlightened;' by him we are made the sons of God, and are born of God, if we believe in him.

He became man in the fulness of time, and manifested his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.' John i, 1-14.

3. St. Paul, in the Epistle of the Colossians, chapter i, calls Jesus "the image of the invisible God," in whom "all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible," even the angels of heaven, "whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers"; "for all things were created by him and in him," "and he is before all; and by him all things consist." He is the head of the Church; he has reconciled us through

death, "to present us holy, and unspotted, and blameless before him," if we continue in the faith in him. Col. i, 15-23.

"In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally," not figuratively. Col. ii, 3, 9.

Peroration: This infinite Son of God has become man for us, and sacrificed himself for us. Oh! how great is our wealth in him! It is his ardent desire, that we should partake of all treasures of his wisdom, glory and beatitude. But only faith opens to us the heavenly treasure. How great is the poverty of infidelity! On our faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ depends our happiness in life, at the hour of our death, and for all eternity.

Bishop Ketteler.

VI.

EVIL CONSEQUENCES OF INORDINATE SELF-LOVE.

As iron is destroyed by rust, and the flower by hoar-frost, so is the virtue of charity, without which we cannot be saved, destroyed by selfishness. Be it my object to-day to put you on your guard against this common enemy of all men.

I. SELFISHNESS DESTROYS TRUE SELF-LOVE.

He who loves himself truly, will endeavor to obtain everlasting happiness by true piety, he who acts otherwise is his own worst enemy. For this reason inordinate self-love is man's worst enemy.

1. *It destroys all virtue,*—the indispensable condition of everlasting beatitude. How can humility, mortification, contempt of the world, etc., consist with selfishness?

2. *It precipitates a man into many vices.* One may safely say, that there is no vice that does not originate from inordinate self-love. Take for instance the capital sins: is not pride an inordinate love of one's self, instigating us to seek our own glory, instead of the glory of God? Avarice, impurity, drunkenness, and all the other sins have evidently their roots in self-love.

Therefore St. Thomas calls self-love "the root of all injustice;" and St. Gregory "the beginning of all sins and trespasses."

3. *Hence the duty of combating* against this evil propensity is incumbent on everyone.

Ismael, who persecuted Isaac, was cast out by Abraham their father, at the command of God. "But as then he, who was born according to the flesh, persecuted him, who was according to the spirit; so also now." Gal. iv, 29. In a similar manner we must cast out inordinate self-love, which cannot consist with true Christian self-love, however repugnant it may be to our natural inclination. "He that loveth his soul shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life everlasting." John xii, 25.

II. IT DESTROYS CHARITY.

1. *Charity*, as it is engraved in every heart by the *law of nature*, cannot consist with selfishness.

To love our neighbor, means to wish him well and to strive to promote his welfare. But he who, for his own sake, cares for his neighbor, does him good only for the purpose of gaining profit from him—the love of the wolf for the lamb.—Does not experience clearly teach, that such is the love of the ambitious, of the avaricious and of the unchaste, for their respective victims?

2. Much more does it destroy *Christian* charity. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." John xv, 12. The love of Jesus for his own is the pattern of charity. How ardent was the love of Jesus!

a. He forsook everything—glory and honor—that he might lead for us a life of poverty, of retirement, and contempt. Does self-love enable man to make sacrifices?

b. He endured infinite fatigue for men; he showed forbearance towards the weak; he was patient with his enemies; and exhibited commiseration with the afflicted.

c. He suffered from the Manger to the Cross, whilst self-love can not bear to endure anything for our neighbor.

Therefore, if Jesus demands of us to follow him, to deny ourselves, and to take our cross upon ourselves, we must above all things combat against inordinate self-love.

III. IT DESTROYS THE LOVE OF GOD.

1. Why must we love God? Evidently because of Himself. This kind of love is incompatible with selfishness.

a. We should acknowledge that we received all things from God, and should employ all things for the honor of God. The selfish man forgets his Benefactor, whom he does not honor, and His holy will, because he does not make the right use of His gifts.

b. We should seek only God, by endeavoring to please him. Selfishness seeks its own. "All seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." Philip. ii, 21. Even practices of devotion are contaminated with selfishness. We are sorry for our sins, more on account of the eternal punishment due to them than because they offend God. We long for heaven, not so much because we shall possess God, as for the sake of other supposed delights more grateful to our self-love. We pray, not so much in order to honor God and his Saints, as to obtain aid in afflictions. Thus we are more intent upon seeking our own profit, than the honor of God, and his glory.

2. *How* must we love God? With a love of preference, as our supreme good, above all things. This kind of love is again incompatible with selfishness.

a. The god of the unchaste and intemperate is their belly. Philip. iii, 19.

b. The covetous serve idols, according to Ephes. v, 5, and set even their own souls to sale, according to Ecclus. x, 10.

c. The proud are ashamed of the living God, because they are ashamed of the religious practices leading to God. They say, their honor does not allow them to forgive offences, to lead a pious life; being ashamed thus of God, but not of sin.

d. All the children of the world value their pleasures, friendships, prospects, etc., more than God and his holy will.

Peroration: St. Augustine says very appropriately: "Two cherished inclinations have built two cities: selfishness, which leads to the contempt of God, a terrestrial city; the love of God, which urges the love of one's self, a celestial city." Alas! the latter is not so densely populated as the former.

Bordoni.

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

VICE OF IMPURITY.

"Why do you think evil in your hearts?" Every sin has its origin in the human heart. Therefore we should beware of bad thoughts, especially of impure thoughts, because, when willfully admitted, they are grievous sins in themselves, and are the cause of impure actions, even of actions against nature. I seize this opportunity to warn you against this frequent vice, by reminding you of its heinousness; and to inform you of the principal means by which we may overcome impurity.

I. THE VICE OF IMPURITY IS MOST SHAMEFUL.

1. In itself.

It deprives man of his dignity, degrading him to the level of the brute. "Man when he was in honor did not understand: he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them." Ps. xlviii, 21. Raphael said of impure persons, that they give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding. Tob. vi, 17. St. Bernard remarks, that man by pride commits the sin of the angels, by avarice, the sin of men, by impurity, the sin of beasts.—Impure sinner, did you ever reflect on your degradation?—Unchastity is, especially, the most grievous of sins

a. In the eyes of the Blessed Trinity. The impure sinner degrades his soul, created by the Father to reign, to the condition of a slave of the flesh; he destroys the divine image itself.—Is it not an insult offered to God, to soil and even to destroy his likeness?

b. The insult inflicted on the Son of God, is expressed in these words: "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then, taking the members of Christ, make them the members of a harlot? God forbid." I Cor. vi, 15. We

entered into an intimate relation with the Son of God when we were baptized, and in Holy Communion.

c. We are temples of the Holy Ghost. If the desecration of a church is a heinous crime, the desecration of the living temple of the Holy Ghost must be a still more detestable one. "But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are." I Cor iii, 17.

Does it not follow that this vice must be the greatest abomination in the eyes of the Blessed Virgin, of the Holy Angels and Saints, and of your departed parents, unchaste sinner? Nay it is an object of abhorrence of the very sinner himself, who therefore conceals his bad deeds, and frequently hates the victim of his lust, after it has been satiated, as Ammon hated Thamar. (II Kings xiii, 17).

2. *On account of its consequences.*

a. It robs man of his innocence, and infects his body and soul. Man in his innocence an angel, becomes, by its loss, an associate of the devil.—"God himself, although he can do all things, is not able to restore to a fallen virgin her virginity." St. Jerome. Impurity, not unlike a cancer, dishonors the body—eyes, ears, tongue, etc. It dishonors the soul, understanding, will, memory, imagination; and takes away all inclination for prayer and for reception of the Sacraments. Thus is fulfilled, in the slave of lust, what Daniel said of the unchaste Elders: "They perverted their own mind, and turned away their eyes that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments." Dan. xiii, 9.

b. Impurity leads man to many other sins and vices. It is the mother of infidelity, which in most cases takes its beginning from this vice; and of hatred of God, who appears to it as a cruel judge, and of many sacrileges, and of all sins.

c. It plunges man into misery, ignominy, and shame; and, finally, into eternal damnation. "He that joineth himself to harlots will be wicked: rottenness and worms shall inherit him. And he shall be lifted up for a greater example; and his soul shall

be taken away out of the number." Ecclus. xix, 3. "He that is an adulterer, for the folly of his heart shall destroy his own soul. He gathereth to himself shame and dishonor; and his reproach shall not be blotted out." Prov. vi, 32.

At last, the impure sinner, unless he does sincere penance, will be cast into hell. The deluge, and the fire and brimstone which rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrha, are a figure of his final punishment. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor sodomites, shall possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. vi, 9. "To the fornicators, their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." Apoc. xxi, 8.

II. MEANS WHICH WE SHOULD EMPLOY AGAINST IMPURITY.

1. We should shun all bad company, and all occasions of sin. There are very few who fall victims to this vice, without being seduced by others. "My son, when sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them. If they shall say: Come with us, my son, walk not thou with them." Prov. i, 10. The proximate occasions of this sin are almost innumerable; of which I may mention dances, parties, intimate conversation with the other sex. Innocence is secured the most in the seclusion of the family.

2. We should carefully guard our senses, and more particularly our sight. Our senses, and our sight especially, are the doors of our souls. David. Solomon. "Look not round about thee in the ways of the city, nor wander up and down in the streets thereof. Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up; and gaze not about upon another's beauty. For many have perished by the beauty of a woman; and hereby lust is enkindled as a fire." Ecclus. ix, 7-9. How cautious were the Saints in the custody of their eyes!

3. We should often receive the Holy Sacraments. By the Holy Sacraments concupiscence is diminished. Holy Eucharist, in which we receive the virginal body of Jesus Christ, is "the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins." Zach. ix, 17. Therefore the Saints, as St. Philip Neri, and St. Joseph

of Copertino, recommended frequent Confession and Communion as the most efficacious means of preserving chastity—recommendation whose wisdom is abundantly confirmed by daily experience.

4. In temptation we should recommend ourselves to God and to the Blessed Virgin. "Watch ye and pray, that you enter not into temptation. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh weak." Mt. xxvi, 41. We cannot overcome the temptations of the flesh without the aid of God. This aid is obtained by prayer. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." I Cor. x, 13. "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom to know, whose gift it was; I went to the Lord, and besought him." Wisd. viii, 21. Recommend yourselves also to the Blessed Virgin. She is powerful as Mother of God; she is kind as our mother; she is desirous to preserve your innocence, because she is the bride of the Holy Ghost, and has predilection for chaste souls. Exceedingly great is the number of those who owe the preservation of their innocence, or their conversion from impurity, to the Blessed Virgin.

5. We should often think that God sees everything, and that we may die at any moment. This thought strengthened Joseph, who said: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?" Gen. xxxix, 9. It strengthened Susanna, who said: "It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." Dan. xiii, 23. We may also die at any moment. "In all thy works remember thy last end; and thou shalt never die." Ecclus. vii, 14.

Peroration: Let us then strive for this beautiful virtue of chastity, remembering the words of the Holy Ghost: "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory! for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and with men. When it is present, they imitate it: and they desire it when it hath withdrawn itself; and it triumpheth crowned for

ever, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts." Wisd. iv, 1-2. Great will be your reward. Those who were not defiled with women, sing a new canticle; and they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Apoc. xiv, 3-4.

J. E. Zollner.

VI.

TRANQUILLITY OF MIND IN A STATE OF SIN.

"Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy: Son, be of good heart: thy sins are forgiven thee." Mt. ix, 2. The Lord is willing to forgive us our sins also, if we confess them with a sincere and contrite heart at the feet of the priest. But there are Christians who are not troubled in the least about the forgiveness of their sins. They live in their sins for months and years, without scarcely feeling remorse of conscience. This tranquillity of mind in a state of sin is exceedingly deplorable. For it is a sign of horrible misery, *both as regards the present and the future.*

I.

When the sinner has an undisturbed mind in his sins, he is in a state of three-fold misery:

1. *In a state of the greatest perversity.*

God, in his admirable charity, has ordained it so, that after sin the conscience awakes and exhorts the sinner to return. "Quid fecisti?" it cries out in his soul. (Gen. ii, 10). Man finds no rest, for "the sound of dread is always in his ears." Job xv, 21. But the oftener the sinner relapses, the deeper he plunges himself into the abyss of vice, the less is heard the voice of the warning God, until at last it is silenced entirely,—a dreadful silence. "The wicked man, when he has come into the depth of sins, contemneth." Prov. xviii, 3. Conscience is trampled under foot.

What misery! Such a sinner has drunk sin like water; and now he knows of no other delight than the delight of sinning. Examine your own conscience, in order to see whether you are in this state of deplorable misery.

2. *In a state of indifferentism regarding faith.*

Faith teaches terrible truths concerning the fate of the unrepentant sinner, such as the following: "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x, 31. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Mt. xxv, 41. "The smoke of their torments shall ascend for ever and ever." But all this cannot move the heart of him who lives undisturbed in his sin. Miserable, indeed, when even the Gospel cannot arouse the sinner!

3. *In a state of obduracy.*

God, in his infinite mercy, stretches out his hand to the greatest sinner, to save him from ruin. He approaches from time to time,—the Good Shepherd—to take the lost sheep upon his shoulders. But he who lives in sin without fear, turns a deaf ear to the voice of God. Being shipwrecked, he refuses to seize the hand that is stretched out to save him.

Oh! that you would acknowledge your own misery! "Thou sayest, I am rich, and made wealthy, and I need nothing; and thou knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." Apoc. iii, 17.

II.

Tranquillity of mind in a state of sin is a sign of reprobation. The poor sinner could be saved, but he is not willing.

1. *What does God demand?*

He demands on the part of the sinner

a. Sincere sorrow for his sins.

"A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Ps. L, 19. "Rend your hearts." Joel ii, 13.

b. Sincere confession.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity." I John i, 9.

c. Sincere amendment.

"Return ye, everyone from his evil way." Jerem. xxv, 5. "Be penitent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Act iii, 19.

These are the indispensable conditions of reconciliation.

2. *What does man perform?*

Is it probable, that he whose conscience is no more aroused, will be reconciled to God?

He remains in his sins. If he is not conscious of his misery, how can he become converted?

What will be the final result? The greatest misery. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Mt. xxv, 41. Are there perhaps such poor sinners among you too, whose conscience slumbers? Oh! that they would open their eyes at last, to see their own dreadful condition, and do true penance!

J. Schuen.

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

DIVINE JUDGMENT.

The kingdom of God is represented as a marriage, to which many are invited. Thus God allures men to his service by the promise of consolation and joys which are in store, both on earth and in heaven, for the friends of God. But as to the wicked, God threatens them with his judgement: "The king was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed the murderers, and burnt their city." Mt. xxii, 7. Let us reflect on this truth, by considering the avenging God, and the trembling sinner.

I. THE AVENGING GOD.

1. *His power* is so great that nothing can resist him. The king sent his armies. The armies sent by God against the wicked, are:

a. The hosts of holy angels. "The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just." Mt. xiii, 29.

b. The choirs of Saints. "The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of the people, and its princes." Isai.

iii, 14. The Apostles will be the judges of Israel; all the Saints, by the manifestation of their own holy lives, will confirm the sentence pronounced against the sinner.

c. All creatures. "His zeal will take armour; and he will arm the creature for the revenge of his enemies. And the whole world shall fight with him against the unwise." Wisd. v. 18, 21.

2. *The punishment.* The king destroyed his enemies. The punishment will come

a. Quickly. Often in this life. "The Lord shall send upon thee famine and hunger, and a rebuke upon all the works which thou shalt do, until he consume and destroy thee quickly, for thy most wicked inventions, by which thou hast forsaken me." Deut. xxviii, 20. Certainly at the end of the sinner's life, and at the end of the world. "When they shall say, peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon them." I. Thess. v. 3.

b. The punishment will be *general*, so that no sinner will escape. "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat and drink; they married wives and were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark: and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the days of Lot. * * * It rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Lk. xvii, 26-38.

c. *For ever.* "Rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." Mt. x, 28.

3. *The victims of divine wrath are the sinners.*

a. Those who sinned in thought. "He will bring those evil men to an evil end." Mt. xxi, 41. . Jesus teaches clearly, that a man can be guilty of adultery and murder, even in thought.

b. Those who sinned with their tongues. "Thou wilt destroy all that speak a lie." Ps. v, 7. God will destroy the calumniators and detractors. "Judge not, that you may not be judged." Mt. vii, 1.

c. Those who sinned by deeds. The king destroyed the murderers, and those who had treated his servants contumeliously.

He burnt their city. This was fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem, and will be repeated by the conflagration of the world.

II. THE TREMBLING SINNER.

1. "But he was silent." For it will be impossible for him to deny his crimes, or to excuse them on the ground of want of strength and grace.

2. "Bind his hands and feet." This intimates

(*a.*) The utmost feebleness of the reprobate in presence of the almighty Judge; (*b.*) the impossibility thenceforth of his performing good works; (*c.*) his groaning and pains as a just punishment for not having moved hands or feet for the honor of God.

3. "Cast him into the exterior darkness." This intimates the terrible punishment of loss. The condemned will be for ever excluded from the joys of heaven, and from the light of grace and consolation.

4. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." These words intimate (*a.*) the vehement torments of hell, and (*b.*) the remorse of conscience and despair of the reprobate.

St. Thomas Aquinas.

VI.

MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN.

In the Gospel of to-day we hear of a king, who made a marriage for his son. He invites the guests; but they decline the invitation. He sends other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner. Come ye to the wedding. But they went their ways; and the rest laid hands on his servants, and put them to death. At last the king invites every one. One had not on a wedding garment, and he was cast

into the exterior darkness. Our Saviour makes the following application: "For many are called but few are chosen." Let us examine what is the meaning of these words.

I.

Jesus himself is no doubt the best interpreter of his own words. But his meaning is obvious

1. From the parable itself. The kingdom is the kingdom of God in heaven and on earth. The king is God, who has prepared for us a great banquet. He has sent his own Son and his priests, to invite all men; but only a few accept the invitation. Jesus Christ and his Church are contemned by the children of the world; and even amongst those who pretend to be disciples of the Lord, there are traitors. Wherefore the eternal Word of God Himself draws the dreadful inference: "Many are called, but few are chosen." Many (the many, or all) are called to the kingdom of God, but of these many only a small number will reach heaven. Since this doctrine is very mortifying to human pride, let us discover whether or not our Saviour has taught the same doctrine on other occasions.

2. In Mt. vii, 13 we read: "Enter ye at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there are who enter by it. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way, which leadeth to life; and few there are who find it."

3. According to Lk. xiii, 23-28, "A certain man said to Jesus: Lord, are they a few that are saved? But he said to them: Strive to enter by the narrow gate: for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able. But when the master of the house shall be gone in, and shall shut the door, you shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us: and he answering shall say to you: I know you not whence you are. Then you shall begin to say: We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. And he shall say to you: I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and

gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

Our Lord himself thus gives us an interpretation of the words: "Many are called, but few are chosen;" and it is in this sense that the Church has ever understood them.

II.

There are many who, trusting to their own false wisdom rather than to the word of God, make themselves judges of God, saying: "Why is it then that God has created men, although he foresaw that they would be condemned?"

1. In the first place, you must renounce Christianity, if you will only admit what you can comprehend. If you believe only in a God whose thoughts are as your thoughts, you make yourself equal to God. There are many who explain away the Christian truths to suit the demands of their own poor, feeble, intellect. But the wisdom of this world is folly before God. We preach the doctrine of the Gospel: "Many are called, but few are chosen."

2. In the second place I say: God has not created you, that he might condemn you; neither has he created you, that you should offend him by sins. He has created you for virtue, which if you would practice, you would indeed have reason to complain, if God should condemn you. But if you refuse to serve him, although he has created you for that end, you cannot complain, if God condemns you, although he created you for eternal happiness.

3. Furthermore, God having created man according to his image and likeness, gave him a free will, without which the dignity of the human being cannot be conceived. Without a free will we would not gain heaven; but being once endowed with free will, we had necessarily also the power to use it to our reprobation. For the punishment of hell is the deliberate choice of our perverse will.

4. Finally, the condemned in hell glorify the name of God.

As he manifests his mercy in the elect, so he manifests his justice in the condemned.

Let us then believe the words of Him who, although he desires that all men should be saved, and although he shed his precious blood for all, nevertheless said: "Many are called, but few are chosen." Let us believe his teaching according to his own interpretation. And let us regulate our lives accordingly. God does not refuse his grace, that we may belong to the few, who enter by the narrow gate. If we should once be of the number of the many, who are lost, it will be our own fault.

Bishop Ketteler.

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

VIRTUE OF PERSEVERANCE.

"He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved." Mt. xxiv, 13. In the Gospel of to-day we are exhorted to persevere in prayer, that we may obtain perseverance in good works, or the virtue of perseverance. Our Saviour exhorts us repeatedly to this virtue. "He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved." "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Lk. ix, 62. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Apoc. ii, 10. Be this grace the subject of our meditation to-day—the grace which helps us to keep our promises, and to be faithful to our good resolutions.

I. MOTIVES.

Of the many motives that should induce us to practice this virtue, I select three.

1. *The unchangeableness of God.* He is the great pattern to which we should conform our lives. "Be you perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect." Mt. v, 48. But we admire and adore in God the unchangeableness of his being. "I am the

Lord, and I change not." Malach. iii, 6. "My counsel shall stand; and all my will shall be done." Isai. xlvi, 10. "With Him there is no change, nor shadow of vicissitude." James i, 17. The change of time does not affect Him. "A thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday which is past." Ps. lxxxix, 4.

But how changeable are we in our love for virtue! To-day we burn with zeal for God's honor and glory; to-morrow every deed for God seems too arduous. Our life is a succession of broken promises. Oh! that the unchangeableness of the divine nature might be reflected in our lives by perseverance in every virtue, in charity, in zeal for prayer, in justice, in chastity!

2. *The unchangeableness of divine charity.* God's charity towards us is as his nature,—unchangeable. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee." Jerem. xxxi, 3. God's love for us is eternal, and it is not extinguished even by our sins.

a. In this visible world "our Father maketh his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust." Mt. v, 45. He kept his promise that he gave to Noe: "All the days of the earth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day, shall not cease." The immutable love of God is, as it were, the heart of this visible world, giving life to every creature.

b. How unchangeable is the love of God for his Church! The Son of God promised: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world," and he is even with the Apostles in their successors, preserving them from error, and distributing his graces to all the children of the Church. The Sacred Heart of Jesus in our tabernacles is the never-failing fountain from which the streams of living water flow that irrigate the garden of the Church.—Now, if our supernatural life is continually nourished by the unchanging and faithful charity of God, should we not return this divine love by perseverance in our good works?

3. *The nature of virtue.* Virtue is only possible with perseverance. To perform good actions for a short time, or by fits

and starts, does not constitute virtue. What does it profit a farmer to see the seed spring forth, only to wither away after a little while, because it did not strike deep roots?—What does it profit to have made a good beginning, if the end is not good? Solomon commenced well and finished badly. Magdalene, St. Augustine, and many other Saints, commenced badly but finished well.

II. MEANS.

The principal means by which we may obtain the virtue of perseverance, are the following:

1. *Prayer.* "Without me you can do nothing." John xv, 5. "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will." Philip. ii, 13. It is by prayer that the Saints have overcome the weakness of human nature. "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." Philip. iv, 13. Let us then work our salvation with confidence in God, and with diffidence of ourselves. "Ask, and you shall receive." John xvi, 24. "If you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you. V, 23.

2. *Energy.* It is not sufficient to ask divine aid by prayer; but we must also co-operate with the grace of God. Where there is a will, there is a way. We should begin every day with fresh courage, saying with the Psalmist: "Now have I begun: this is the change of the right hand of the Most High." Ps. lxxvi, 11.—We should fear no obstacle laid in our way by our enemy. "Wherefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one." Eph. vi, 13-16.

3. *Frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist.* This celestial bread was the source of perseverance to the Saints. "He that

eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same shall also live by me." John vi, 57. He who abideth in Jesus, the God of strength, will persevere in the performance of good works.—God gave us a figure of this in the miraculous bread in the strength of which the prophet Elias walked forty days and forty nights.

4. *The remembrance of heaven.* "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field: which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Mt. xiii, 44. Who would not do everything, in order to gain possession of this treasure?—Remember the price of heaven,—the precious blood of our Saviour. Oh! that we would display the perseverance in obtaining celestial goods, which we display in obtaining terrestrial things!

Peroration: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." I Cor. xv, 58. The struggle is short, the triumph is eternal.

J. Ehrler.

VI.

DUTIES REGARDING OUR BODY.

We behold our Saviour to-day healing a bodily disease,—one of the most frequent of the miracles he wrought. Diseases are the general consequence of original sin; in many cases, however, they are the consequence of our actual sins. For sin is not only detrimental to the soul, but also to the body. There are even vices which tend directly to the ruin of the body. Let me then address you on the duties we are bound to fulfill towards our body.

I. WE HAVE DUTIES TOWARDS OUR BODY.

Man is not sovereign master of his body, so as to be at liberty to treat it in whatever way he lists.

1. *Reason* teaches us that we cannot dispose of our body at pleasure.

a. We received it from God for a distinct purpose; it is therefore not our own property; but we are only its stewards. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why doest thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" I Cor. iv, 7. All life is from God. "Thou shalt take away their breath, and they shall fail, and shall return to their dust." Ps. ciii, 29.

b. Life and health are the indispensable conditions of fulfilling our duties. "Better is a poor man, who is sound, and strong of constitution, than a rich man who is weak and afflicted with evils. Health of the soul in holiness of justice, is better than all gold and silver; and a sound body, than immense revenues. There is no riches above the riches of the health of the body; and there is no pleasure above the joy of the heart. Better is death than a bitter life; and everlasting rest, than continual sickness." Ecclus. xxx, 14-17. *Mens sana in corpore sano*, was desired at all times. Our conscience would, therefore, reproach us, if by our own fault we should ruin the health of our body, or shorten our life.

2. *Religion* teaches us to reverence our own body.

a. It is a sanctuary and temple of the Holy Ghost, dedicated to him by the Holy Sacraments, by the water of baptism, the chrism of Confirmation, and above all by the Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ. "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body." I Cor. vi, 15, 19.

We are not our own, but we are the Lord's. He holds a double title in our bodies—as Creator, and as Redeemer. As Judge he will demand an account of our stewardship.

II. WHAT ARE THESE DUTIES?

1. Whilst in health we should avoid

a. All *extravagance* in eating, drinking and in amusements. "In many meats there will be sickness; and greediness will turn to choler. By surfeiting many have perished: but he that is temperate, shall prolong life." Ecclus. xxxvii, 33. This declaration of the Holy Ghost is confirmed by experience, which teaches that a temperate life, as the life of the Trappists and other monks, is the frequent cause of living to a very old age; whilst intemperance is the cause of many diseases prevalent among those, "whose god is their belly." Philip. iii, 19. We should also avoid all extravagance in our daily labors. Those who, instigated by no noble motive, but through avarice, ambition, etc., overwork themselves, or their children, or, from bad motives, do not procure the necessaries of life for themselves or for their children, load their conscience with a heavy responsibility.

b. *All vehement passions*, such as wrath, envy, pride, lust, covetousness, excess of sadness. The day of revelation of conscience will make it known to the world how many millions and millions met a premature death in consequence of sins of impurity. As to sadness, the Holy Ghost says: "Give not up thy soul to sadness; and afflict not thyself in thy own counsel. The joyfulness of the heart is the life of a man, and a never-failing treasure of holiness: and the joy of a man is length of life. Drive away sadness far from thee. For sadness hath killed many; and there is no profit in it." Ecclus. xxx, 22-25. "Envy and anger shorten a man's days; and pensiveness will bring old age before the time. A cheerful and good heart is always feasting." V. 26-27.

Self-mortification is, besides, one of the most necessary Christian virtues. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Mt. xvi, 24.

2. *In the time of sickness.*

a. The true Christian bears sickness with patience and resignation.

b. He trusts in God, who is the Lord of life and death.

c. He sends for a physician and subjects himself to his directions.

"Honor the physician for the need thou hast of him; for the Most High has created him. The Most High has created medicines out of the earth; and a wise man will not abhor them." Ecclus. xxxviii, 1, 4. But if a patient refuses to take medicines on account of their bitter taste, or to abstain from certain food that pleases his palate, it is a sign of gross sensuality. If a sick person will not send for the physician in order to save the expense, it is flagrant covetousness. The fool exposes himself to the risk of losing his whole property, and life with it—for what?

Peroration: If the Christian religion commands us to take care of our body, it forbids also too great anxiety and effeminacy. "Mortify, therefore, your members." Col. iii, 5. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin; but present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead: and your members as instruments of justice unto God." Rom. vi, 13.

Periodical *Philothea.*

All-Saints.

V.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

The festival of All-Saints, and the Commemoration Day of the souls in Purgatory, call to our mind the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. I will select this important subject for our meditation to-day, and for this purpose will explain to you wherein the Communion of Saints consists; and what are the benefits we reap from it.

I. NATURE OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

The Communion of Saints consists in this, that all the faithful are members of one body, whose Head is Christ Jesus, and therefore the different members participate in one another's spiritual goods.

1. The various limbs of the human body are intimately united. Our feet walk, our hands work, our eyes see, for the benefit of the whole body. And when one limb feels pain, the other limbs suffer at the same time, and are, so to say, anxious to relieve the afflicted limb. The principal part of the human body is the head, without which all the other members would be dead. The many millions belonging to the Catholic Church are also intimately united. Although their vocations are widely different, yet the fruit of their labor is for the benefit of all, so that every one participates in the prayers and good works of the religious, in the holy sacrifice offered up by the priests, etc. For the same reason, we rejoice at the beatitude of the Saints, who, in their turn, pray for us, that we may one day join their blessed society, and impart to us their merits. For the suffering souls in Purgatory we pray, and make atonement in their stead. Thus the word of the Apostle is verified: "If one member suffer any thing, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it." I Cor. xii, 26. And "as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not

the same office: so we being many, are one body in Christ, and each one, members one of another." Rom. xii, 4. The head of this mystical body is Jesus Christ, who gives grace to every Christian. "He is the head of the body, the Church." Col.i, 18.

2. According to the three different states in which the members of our holy Church are, we distinguish the Church *Militant*, *i. e.*, the faithful on earth, and the Church *Suffering*, *i. e.*, the souls in Purgatory, and the Church *Triumphant*, *i. e.*, the Saints in heaven. The members of the Church Triumphant have overcome the world, Satan, and their own concupiscence, and the Lord has fulfilled in them what he promised (Apoc. iii, 2): "To him that shall overcome, I will grant to sit with me in my throne, as I also have overcome, and have sat with my Father in his throne." Those members of the Catholic Church who are still detained in Purgatory, are called the Church Suffering, because by sufferings they atone for their venial sins, and undergo temporal punishment due for their mortal sins, the guilt of which was released during their earthly sojourn. The faithful on earth constitute the Church Militant, because their visible community, as well as its single members, have to combat against enemies, visible and invisible. Vide Eph. vi, 11.

Yet it would be erroneous to regard the Church Militant, Suffering, and Triumphant, as three distinct churches. They are, properly speaking, but one church in three different states. The people of Israel, when crossing the Red Sea, were divided into three distinct bodies or columns; one, which not having reached the sea, was pressed hard by the persecuting Egyptians; another, which was already in the channel of the sea, and hastened to reach the shore; and the third, which having passed through the ocean, rejoiced at being in safety. Yet although divided into three parts, they constituted one people; and therefore serve as a figure of the Catholic Church.—We call all these members of the Church Saints, because they are sanctified by the Holy Sacraments, are obliged to strive for sanctity, and are destined to become Saints in heaven.—What blessedness to belong to this glorious society—to be brethren or sisters of the blessed Saints

in heaven! That we may value this honor the more, we will recapitulate a few of the benefits we reap from the Communion of Saints.

II. THE BENEFITS WE REAP FROM THIS COMMUNION.

1. By reason of our *communion with the Saints in heaven*, we partake of the merits which they acquired while here below, and are assisted by their intercession with God in our behalf.

a. It cannot be doubted that we partake of the merits of the Saints. God would not have destroyed Sodom, if ten just had been found in that city. Gen. xviii, 32. God said to Solomon: "Because thou hast done this, and hast not kept my covenant, and my precepts, which I have commanded thee, I will divide and rend thy kingdom, and will give it to thy servant. Nevertheless in thy days I will not do it, *for David thy father's sake:* but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son." III Kings xi, 11. God blessed Laban for the sake of his servant Jacob, and Putiphar for the sake of the innocent Joseph. St. Augustine says, that Saul received the grace of conversion through the merits of St. Stephen the proto-martyr.

b. We are assisted by their intercession with God in our behalf. The Archangel Gabriel said to Tobias: "I offered thy prayer to the Lord." Tobias xii, 12. If we expect divine grace through the prayers of our fellow-men on earth, we have the more reason to trust in the intercession of the Saints in heaven.

2. By reason of our communion with the souls in Purgatory, we are enabled to come to the assistance of these our suffering brethren by prayers, alms-deeds, and other good works, especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the application of Indulgences.

This doctrine is engraven on man's heart, wherefore we meet even Protestants, who pray for the dead. It is clearly established by Holy Scripture. "Judas Machabeus sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead. It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." II Mach. xii, 43, 46.

3. By reason of our mutual communion with the faithful on earth, we participate in all the Masses, prayers, and good works, of the Catholic Church, and in general, in all her spiritual goods.

Peter was delivered out of prison, because prayer was made without ceasing by the Church to God for him. Act xii. St. Francis Xavier recommended himself in tempests and all dangers "to the prayers of the Church, our mother, the spouse of Christ."—

We participate, also, in all the good works of our brethren and sisters on the face of the earth, "as the eyes see for every member of the body, the hands work, the feet walk for it." (St. Augustine). "God has tempered the body together * * that the members might be mutually careful for one another * * Now, you are the body of Christ, and members of member." I Cor. xii, 24-27. Let me, however, remark that the whole merit of a good work does not go to the community. Every good work has a treble profit; it increases sanctifying grace, and augments future glory in heaven; but only for him who performed the work. Furthermore, it remits temporal punishment due for sins, and obtains natural and supernatural goods. This profit is imparted to others also, in a different degree according to worthiness.

Sinners, as dead members, forfeit the greatest part of spiritual goods; nevertheless, by virtue of their union with the Church, they still receive various blessings and graces in order that they may become converted.

Peroration: Let us every day pray for our fellow-Christians on earth, especially for the missionaries in heathen countries, and for sinners. Let us every day pray for the souls suffering in Purgatory, and recommend ourselves every day and night to the protection of the Saints in heaven. Above all, let us strive to lead holy lives, for we are fellow-citizens with the Saints, and the domestics of God. Eph. ii, 19.

J. E. Zollner.

VI.

ALL-SAINTS A DAY OF JOY TO THE CHURCH AND TO EVERY CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN.

The Holy Church has devoted every day to the memory of one or other of the Saints. But, because the Saints are so numerous, the Church has instituted this present festival day, in order to venerate and invoke all the Saints at once. It is indeed a day of great joy, and therefore the Church exhorts us to rejoice and be glad. It is a day of joy in heaven, where the Saints remember their tribulations and sorrows on earth, which are now turned into everlasting peace. It is at the same time a joy on earth, to our Holy Mother, and to every Catholic Christian.

I. ALL-SAINTS IS A DAY OF JOY TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

1. *All the Saints were and are her children.* She has born them into life everlasting. She has nourished them with the milk of the word of God and with the bread of life, the body and blood of the Lord. She has watched them with the loving eye of a mother, and guarded them with a mother's care. How can she but rejoice, when she sees millions of her children standing before the throne of the Lamb, wearing golden crowns on their heads? How great was the joy of Jacob the Patriarch, when it was announced to him: "Joseph, thy son, liveth; he governs the land of Egypt." The Church knows that her children reign for ever, and are the friends of the Heavenly King.

2. *The Saints are to the Church a great consolation in her man tribulations.* When Jacob heard, that his son was exalted to so high a dignity, he was at the time in great tribulation, because of the famine that had come over the land. Now he knew that his son Joseph would procure all that he and his family were in need of.

Our Holy Church is also in great tribulation because of the many persecutions to which she and her children, and especially her visible head, are exposed. But to-day a ray of light shines forth into the darkness of affliction. The Church knows that

this visitation has come upon her on account of the sins of her children; to-day, however, she beholds the millions of her children, who ever loved their mother so dearly, interceding with God for her. And knowing the power of the intercession of the Saints, she implores her divine Lord, through their intercession, being full of confidence, that, for their sake, the days of visitation will be shortened.

3. *This festival day is proof of her being the true Church of Christ.* There are many religious societies which claim to be the work of God. To-day they are all put to confusion. Our Church points triumphantly to the millions of Saints, who shining in the splendor of glory, surround the divine throne, and are the crown and glory of their mother. "Now then," our Church says to the heretical communities, "if you pretend to be from God, prove it. The true Church must be holy, because the Son of God cannot have chosen a bride who is not holy. Behold the millions of Saints, whom I have born, the fruit of my holiness. Only a good tree can bring forth good fruit; only a holy Church can bring forth holy children. Where are your Saints? You cannot name one whose sanctity God has testified by a holy and miraculous life." And all must keep silent, because everyone of good will must acknowledge that only the Catholic Church shines in the glory of the Saints.

II. ALL-SAINTS IS A DAY OF JOY TO THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN.

1. The Holy Church presenting to our spiritual eyes the multitudes of Saints, says to everyone of us: Their state of beatitude shall be your state also; rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. Great indeed! For you shall enjoy everlasting peace, everlasting glory, everlasting joy.

a. Everlasting peace. Oh! how numerous are the afflictions, how painful the grief, whereby our days our embittered! Many sick persons long for few days of rest, and it is not granted. In heaven reigns eternal peace; eternal rest is given unto the Saints by the Lord. "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from

their labors." Apoc. xiv, 16. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away." Apoc. xxi, 4. If we knew nothing else of heaven than this, it would be enough to fill our hearts with an ardent longing to be there.

b. Everlasting glory. How beautiful is this earth, the abode of sinners, when the sun rises in his glory! How sweet are the sounds of music! How beauteous are in their innocence the children of sinful parents! And yet, if all that is beautiful and charming, could be gathered in one place, this very place would be a desert in comparison with the garden of Paradise.

c. Everlasting joy. When the prodigal son, after a life of misery and want, returned to his father's house, and received his embrace, and found a banquet prepared in honor of the son who had been lost, and was found again; his heart was overwhelmed with joy, when he remembered the past, the days spent in a foreign country. But what is this in comparison with our joys in heaven? There we shall rest in the embrace of our Father, near the heart of our Saviour; the Angels and Saints will converse with us, their brethren and sisters. And our joy shall never have an end.

If we would often reflect on heaven, we should be like St. Ignatius, who used to say: "How loathsome is this earth to me, when I remember heaven!"

2. But let us not forget that heaven is a reward, and therefore must be obtained by merits; and that we cannot reach the abode of the Saints, unless we tread the path which they trod before us.

For there is but one heaven, the heaven of the Saints, and one way leading to it. This way is Jesus Christ, who says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." No one will reach heaven but he who, after the example of the Saints, believes the doctrine of Christ, observes his commandments, and makes use of the means of grace instituted by him.

Peroration: Let every one of us make the firm resolution: "I will reach heaven, come what may." Every morning let us renew this resolution, and thereupon spend the day in the performance of good works. Let us also every day invoke the Saints, especially the queen of Saints, our mother, and the Holy Guardian Angel, that we may obtain the grace to follow their examples. If you will keep this resolution, your reward will be great in heaven.

J. Schmitt.

Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

GOD'S RECKONING WITH MEN.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants." Mt. xviii, 23. The king is God, and we are his servants. God takes an account of his servants in a double manner; here in a judgment of mercy; hereafter in a judgment of severity.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF MERCY.

We are debtors to God, who confided great things to our care. "Of his fulness we all have received, and grace for grace." John i, 16. Therefore the Lord takes an account with us on earth in the confessional. There he exercises mercy, as is manifest, when we reflect:

1. *On the judge.*

God does not judge in the confessional by himself directly; but one of our fellow-men judges us in his name. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." John xx, 23.

a. This judge is acquainted with the frailties of human nature. He, being a man himself, sees another law in his members, fighting against the law of his mind. Rom. vii, 23. He knows by his own sad experience how prone man is to sin; and he asks for forgiveness at the close of each day, and, like your-

self, has recourse to the confessional. This reflection will create confidence in the judge; and you will approach the confessional with greater courage, than if an Angel were to judge you in the name of God.

b. He has compassion on the sinner.

This compassion is created by the consciousness of his own sinfulness. He is, besides, under the strictest obligation to be meek and mild in the confessional.

2. *On the judgment itself.*

a. It is a secret judgment, not before witnesses. The priest is bound under the most solemn obligation to keep perpetual silence about the secrets confided to him. "If any one should dare to reveal a sin that has been made known to him in the confessional, he is not only to be deprived of his priestly functions, but also to be sent into a cloister to do penance for his whole lifetime." Conc. Lat. Cap. xii de poen.

b. A gracious judgment. Forgiveness is granted. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." It is granted to the greatest sinner. "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven." Mt. xviii, 18.

Thus God does everything to facilitate our account. Let us frequently approach this tribunal of grace! "Nothing is more useful and wholesome to a man, than when he has committed a sin, not to delay to confess it." St. Jerome.

II. THE JUDGMENT OF SEVERITY.

When man has departed this life, God will take an account with him again. "It is appointed for man once to die, and after this the judgment." Heb. ix, 27. This judgment will be exceedingly severe.

1. *We must give the strictest account*

a. Of everything. "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment." Mt. xii, 36. We must give an account of our whole life and of every hour, of the employment of our talents, of our thoughts, words and deeds.

b. *Before God*, who is omniscient. "The Lord is a God of all knowledge, and to him are thoughts prepared." I Kings ii, 3. "He hath searched out the deep, and the heart of men; and considered their crafty devices." Ecclus. xlii, 18. All sins of man from his childhood to his old age lie open before the eyes of God.—The Judge admits no excuses. In vain are all excuses, such as want of grace, human frailty, the bad examples of others, etc.

2. *The strictest judgment will be administered.*

"Every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." I Cor. iii, 8. He will then be blessed who has loved and kept the commandments. But infinitely unhappy will be the sinner, because he will receive

a. *No grace.* "When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand; when tribulation and distress shall come upon you, then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear." Prov. i, 27. In vain will be all prayers and tears; for the time of grace will have passed.

b. *But due punishment.* The sinner will be punished by fire. "He shall separate him, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mt. xxiv, 51.

Peroration: Such is the judgment that awaits you, if you should die in your sins! Yet you continue perhaps living in intemperance, impurity and injustice. When the hour of judgment will come on a sudden, what then? Then will you shed bitter tears, and curse your levity. Oh! come then in time, and take refuge in the judgment of mercy, that you may escape the judgment of strictest justice.

Joseph Schuen.

VI.

REMEMBER THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

The Gospel of to-day is in accord with the spirit of the Church as it is manifested in the liturgical offices of these days,

wherein she exhorts her children on earth to come to the aid of their departed brethren in Purgatory. For several Holy Fathers, as St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, see in the unmerciful servant who was delivered to the torturers until he should pay all the debt, a figure of the souls in Purgatory who are tormented until the debt is paid. I propose to address you on this important subject, explaining to you the doctrine of the council of Trent xxv, (1) that there is a Purgatory, and (2) that we are able to come to the aid of the souls detained in this place.

PART I.

ON PURGATORY.

1. *That there is a Purgatory* is evident

a. From Holy Scripture, in which we find the Catholic doctrine on this point clearly expressed. Vide II Mach. xii, 43-46. Ecclus. vii, 37. Mt. v, 25, 26; xii, 32. I Cor. iii, 13-15.

b. From the constant practice of the Church, which in all ages has approved of intercessions for the departed.

c. From reason, which finds it in accordance with divine sanctity, justice, and mercy, that those many Christians who die in an imperfect state of soul, should neither forthwith enter heaven, nor be cast into hell, but be purified, until they be worthy of heaven.

2. *Application.*

a. This doctrine is very edifying, as it reminds us forcibly of the divine sanctity, justice, and bounty; and no less of the value of innocence, of zeal, and of penance.

b. It is very consoling. For if there were no Purgatory, we should have, in consideration of human frailty, strong reason to entertain alarming fear regarding our own salvation, and the salvation of those who are dearest to us.

3. *Who will be subjected to the flames of Purgatory?*

a. All those who die free from mortal sin, but contaminated with venial sins, which may be forgiven in the world to

come (Mt. xii, 32), although they exclude from heaven for a time, because there shall not enter anything defiled. Apoc. xxi, 27. Remember the infinite sanctity of God, who will require an account of every idle word, and who will not release the prisoner, until the last farthing shall have been paid.

b. All those who have yet to endure punishment for sins from whose guilt they have been already absolved, both mortal and venial. He who sins after baptism deserves to be treated with greater severity, wherefore God does not release the temporal punishment incurred by sin.—How important is it then to do penance!

4. *Wherein does Purgatory consist?*

a. Although the duration of the sufferings is unknown to us, yet it is quite certain, that they will last, until all contamination of sin has been blotted out, and the whole punishment due has been endured. No doubt the contamination of a scandal, debts unpaid, and similar causes, influence the delay of redemption. It is no less certain that penance in Purgatory lasts longer, than here below, because it is no longer a voluntary penance. Therefore let us do penance whilst we are yet in the body.

b. The kind of sufferings. Although it seems that the *fire* in Purgatory is to be understood in a figurative sense, and not as a material fire, yet, since in order to convey an idea of the Purgatorial punishment, an element is chosen which occasions us the most excruciating of sufferings, there can be no doubt that that punishment will be one of fearful severity. According to the doctrine of the Saints, the pains in Purgatory far surpass our imagination.—Therefore let us do penance on earth by prayer, fasting, and alms-giving. "Make an agreement with thy adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest, perhaps, the adversary deliver thee to the judge, etc. Mt. v, 25.

c. Comparison between the pains in Purgatory and in Hell. It is erroneous to say that the only difference between them consists in the one being only temporary, whilst the others are everlasting. For the sins of the souls in Purgatory are either

venial, or sins whose guilt has been remitted. These souls are the brides of God, and are ever ready to submit to his holy will; and they are full of consolation, because their redemption is secured. The condemned are still and for ever in mortal sin, enemies of God, full of hatred and fury. Under such circumstances, what comparison can be instituted between the punishment in Purgatory and that in Hell? Who would compare a criminal sentenced to death with a holy martyr, the thief on the left with the thief on the right, the contrition of Peter with that of Judas? The same difference exists between the souls in Purgatory and the lost in Hell.—Although the penitential tears of Mary Magdalen were bitter, they were sweetened by the certainty of having obtained pardon of her sins. The souls in Purgatory are in a similar condition.

PART II.

ON THE SUCCOUR WE MAY BRING TO THE SUFFERING SOULS IN PURGATORY.

1. *We are able to come to their aid.*

a. This is the doctrine of the Church, founded on tradition, on the ninth article of the Apostles' Creed teaching the *Communion of Saints*, and on Holy Scripture. II Mach. 43-46. History teaches that from the earliest times suffrages were made for the departed souls. St. Monica asked on her death-bed her son Augustine to remember her at the altar.

b. It is a consoling doctrine. Consoling to the dying Christian, who knows that his family, nay the Church herself, will pray and offer up sacrifices for the peace of his soul. Consoling also to those left behind, because an opportunity is offered them to remain in a charitable intercourse with the dear departed.

c. It exhorts us to render ourselves worthy of these suffrages. He who is slothful and indifferent in performing good works, what right has he to hope that others will love his soul better than he did himself? And is it not a fact that Christians are more inclined to pray for their zealous brethren, than for the lukewarm? We render ourselves worthy of being delivered from

Purgatory by the good works of the faithful, if in our lifetime we are zealous of relieving the suffering souls. Such is the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas.

2. *We are obliged to come to their aid.*

a. We are urged by the duty of *charity:* toward God, who desires the delivery of his dear children; toward the Saints, who long to see them in their society; toward the Church, who is anxious to have her children transplanted into paradise; toward the suffering souls, who are not only our fellow-men and fellow-Christians, but frequently are our near relations.

b. We are urged by the duty of *gratitude.*

c. Our own advantage demands it. We give spiritual alms, which our Lord will reward a hundred-fold. We oblige the souls in Purgatory to show their gratitude toward us, which they are probably able to do whilst they are imprisoned, and surely will do when they are delivered. Besides we render ourselves worthy of the suffrages of the faithful, when we ourselves are in the state of purification.

3. *By what means are we enabled to aid them?*

By all meritorious works; but especially

a. By the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, by which the satisfaction made by the sacrifice on the Cross is applied, so that it is called a propitiating sacrifice for the living and the dead. (Trid. xxii, Cap. 2.) Christian art symbolizes this doctrine by representing to our eyes an Angel, who pours out the Chalice upon the burning souls in Purgatory. We should, therefore, be anxious to have the holy Sacrifice offered up for them, and to be frequently present at this highest form of worship.

b. By prayers which we offer up for them, either directly, or through the intercession of the Saints. It is also a pious opinion that the Saints descend to the suffering souls from time to time, in order to console them, which idea suggested those pictures, by which the Blessed Virgin is represented as stretching out a scapular or a rosary to the suffering souls.

c. By alms-giving and fasting; by gaining indulgences and by fulfilling certain obligations in their name, as by paying their debts, by restoring honor of which they deprived others.

Peroration: Let us then be induced by these reflections to come to the assistance of our afflicted brethren, and at the same time to lead such lives that we may have no reason to fear a long Purgatory.

P. A. Scherer.

Twenty-Second Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

TO WHAT WE ARE EXHORTED BY THE DIVINE IMAGE IN OUR SOULS.

The Gospel of the day reminds us that we are every one of us the image of God—coins, the image and inscription on which is that of the Blessed Trinity. By virtue of this dignity solemn duties are incumbent on us of which I select the following for our meditation.

1. *The divine image ought to be our highest glory.*

The human heart is naturally inclined to pride. God has forbidden us to indulge our pride in earthly things, such as riches and honors; but he wills that we seek its gratification in our resemblance to him.

Was God able to create anything sublimer than his own image? The Supreme Creator has made us according to the supreme pattern—his only-begotten Son, of whom it is written, that he is "the splendor of his glory, and the figure of his substance." Heb. i, 3. What wonder, if the Persons of the Blessed Trinity took counsel of one another, so to speak, when about to create man, in order that our dignity might be deeply impressed in our mind? "Let *us* make man to *our* image and likeness." Gen. i, 26.

For the sake of this divine image the Lord sent an Angel

down from heaven to protect it. And when it was contaminated in us, the Son of the Father came into our earthly abode, to restore it at the price of his own precious blood.

Let us then not be of the number of those who unmindful of their true greatness, endeavor to satisfy their pride by the vanities of the world.

2. *Let the divine image which we bear be a constant exhortation to serve God.*

It was customary among the Gentiles to mark the foreheads of slaves with the names of their masters that they might be reminded of their service, and be recognized, if they should make an attempt to escape. The Lord engraved his own image on our souls, in order to impress on our mind in whose service we are. "Holy to the Lord," were the words engraved upon a plate worn by the high-priest. Adorned with the image of his God, stands man as a priest in the midst of creation; and this image recalls to his mind that he is "holy to the Lord."

The whole universe serves Him who created it. The morning stars praise him together, and the sons of God make a joyful melody. Job xxxviii, 7. The angelic hosts bow in profound humility before him; and the whole of visible nature is obedient to him. And should we, upon whom the light of his countenance is signed (Ps. iv, 7), be the only ones to refuse to serve him? Far be it from us! On the contrary, being children of God, let us follow the example of our first-born brother Jesus, who was obedient even unto death,—Let us serve God with body and soul; let us serve him for ever.

3. *Never defile the divine image by sin.*

The divine image is defiled by sin. This explains sufficiently why sin is called in Holy Scripture "the mystery of iniquity." By sin we trample under foot the divine seal of our resemblance to God; we destroy the picture printed with his own hands.

How great the wrath of God is and the punishment inflicted by him, we see in the history of Adam and Eve. After they had contaminated the divine image, ignorance, concupiscence,

many tribulations, and death, temporal and eternal death, were the consequences of the outrage.

When the wife of Putiphar attempted to seduce the innocent Joseph, he replied: "Behold, my master hath delivered all things to me, and knoweth not what he hath in his own house. Neither is there any thing which is not in my power, or that he hath not delivered to me, but thee, who art his wife. How then can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?" Gen. xxxix, 8. The chaste youth, remembering the love of his master, considered it as an act of enormous ingratitude to offend him.—When the concupiscence of the flesh is inflamed; when avarice and envy make you covet your neighbor's goods; when pride is at work in your heart, in order to create discontent with your present humble condition, in all these temptations remember the divine charity, and say with Joseph: "How could I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?"

No injury can be compared with the injury inflicted on God's image by one mortal sin. "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mt. xvi, 26.

4. *Endeavor to increase every day the beauty of the divine image.*

God is the sublime pattern of our perfection. Therefore, we should imitate the divine attributes by our own virtues; his immutability by perseverance in performing good works; his holiness, by striving after perfection; his justice, by avoiding the slightest injustice, and by being just in our judgment concerning our neighbor.

The Son of God descended from heaven, not only to redeem us, but also to be our teacher by his own exemplary life. It is the task of our life to become conformable to the image of the Son, as the Apostle says: "Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son: that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren." Rom. viii, 29. Whatever we make of ourselves in this life, we shall be for all eternity. If we be meek, humble, kind, charitable, chaste, we

shall be so also in eternity; if we carry in our body a wrathful, impure, envious, in short, a sinful soul, she will be wrathful, impure, envious, sinful, for all eternity in the society of the devils.

5. *Respect the divine image in your neighbor.*

If we were not His image, God could not love us with that strong and tender love which he entertains toward us. Therefore the divine image which is imprinted in the soul of our neighbor, should also be our motive of Christian love to him. Let us therefore respect and love in our neighbor the divine image; let us, for the sake of this image, bring him corporal and spiritual help.

This seal of the divinity in man constitutes his real worth. Also the least of men is the image and likeness of the infinite God. How great then is the injustice of the proud man, who on account of earthly advantages despises his fellow-man! You despise not a man, but God himself, whose image and likeness you despise.

If we respect the resemblance to God in man,—should we then dare to seduce him to sin, the malignity of which originates precisely from this resemblance? When we reflect that by sin the image of the heavenly King is destroyed in the human soul, we understand the terrible word of our Saviour that it would be better for the seducer to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

We are accordingly also convinced, that it is our sacred duty to promote the beauty of this divine image in the soul of our fellow-man. A heavenly prince guards every Christian soul; he guards the soul of your child also, ye parents. Lay at least no obstacles in his way.—Everyone of you should join one of the societies for the propagation of the faith.

Peroration: "We are the image and likeness of God," we will say to the infidels of our days. We are not the descendants of brutes, but we are the relations of the Angels. As an artist works enthusiastically day by day to perfect the representation of a grand idea, so let us employ every day, every hour, to per-

fect the divine image in our souls, that when the veil of our body falls to the ground, that image may be complete.

J. Ehrler.

VI.

MAN IS GOD'S PROPERTY.

"Render to God the things that are God's." More than all visible things, we ourselves, with the faculties of body and soul, are God's. Man is God's image, God's coin, and, therefore, belongs to God entirely.

I. ON WHAT IS THIS OWNERSHIP ON THE PART OF GOD FOUNDED?

1. *On creation.* Man is God's property

a. As God's creature. All that is created belongs to God, by whose omnipotence it was made. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: the world, and all they that dwell therein." Ps. xxiii, 1. Man is not excluded from this divine ownership, for he is also God's creature. Gen. ii, 7.

b. As God's creature he bears the divine image. Although the whole universe reflects as in a mirror the divine perfections, man is a purer and brighter mirror: he is God's image. "Let us make man to our image and likeness." Gen. i, 26. How brightly does this divine image shine in the human soul, who is a spirit, immortal, endowed with understanding and free will, conscious of its vocation to sanctity. And this light of the divine countenance will never vanish.

2. *On redemption.*

a. The soul of the first man was a supernatural image of God, created in original justice and sanctity. In this blessed state she was the admiration of the Angels.

b. In consequence of the first sin, the soul was deprived of sanctifying grace. "As by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death: and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." Rom. v, 12. The divine image was in

consequence of this sin so disfigured, that it could hardly be recognized any more.

c. God had compassion on man, and made efforts—by the Incarnation—to restore his image in the human soul. "I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name: thou art mine." Isai. xliii, 1. Now our soul is impressed again with the image of the divine Son, who is the splendor and substantial image of the Father. And in order to preserve his image in our souls, he strengthens them with his own precious Flesh and Blood.

II. CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM THIS DIVINE OWNERSHIP.

It follows that according to the demand, "Render to God the things that are God's," we should render to God

1. *Our soul*, to-wit:

a. Our *understanding*, that we may increase in the knowledge of God and of his revelation. To have little regard for God and divine things is to deprive God of what belongs to him.

b. Our *will*. We should will at all times that which God wills, submit to his dispositions, and keep his commandments. "That servant, who knew the will of his Lord, and hath not prepared, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Lk. xii, 47.

c. Our *heart*. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." Mt. xxii, 37. Who could deserve our love more than God who is all love and bounty and possessed of all perfections? "Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us." I John iv, 19.—No other love can satisfy our heart, "for God has created us for himself, and our heart is restless, until it rests in God." St. Augustine.

2. *Our body and all its members.* "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service." Rom. xii, 1. We must then serve God with all the members and faculties of our body.

a. We must incline our *ears* to the word of God, to

warnings and exhortations. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." I Kings iii, 9.

b. We must, like David, keep our *eyes* directed to the Lord. "My eyes are ever turned toward the Lord" (Ps. xxiv, 15), and turn them away that they may not behold vanity. Ps. cxviii, 37.

c. No bad word should proceed from our *mouth.* "Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth; but that which is good to the edification of faith, that it may afford grace to the hearers." Eph. iv, 29.

d. Our *hands* should not be contaminated with injustice, but should perform good works. "Glorify and bear God in your body." I Cor. vi, 20. "But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy." iii, 17,

e. All the other members of our body should be employed in the service of God.

Peroration: Let us then not lose sight of the future account which the Lord will take from his servants, of the use of his property, that we may be able to say: We rendered to God the things that are God's. Then the Lord will give to us the things that are ours: his own vision, and the possession of Himself, and the society of the Saints.

Grimm.

Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

WHAT RELIGION IS TO THE DYING.

The voice of Jesus, saying: "The girl is not dead, but sleepeth," was a consolation to the mourning parents. The voice of the holy religion established by Jesus Christ is still a great consolation in the midst of weeping and lamentation so frequently heard at the bedside of the dying. When the world disappears, friends retire, wealth loses its value, and the open grave yawns,—it is only religion that can bring consolation.

I. RELIGION IS A CONSOLATION TO THE AFFLICTED HEART.

1. Great are the pains and sorrows of the dying.

The anguish of death is the greatest pain that can befall man, as we may judge from the external signs of it. But religion informs him about the origin of his pitiful condition. It is caused by sin, and God has imposed this anguish on him as a punishment of his sins.

2. Man is troubled concerning the future.

When recalling the past, he may fear that God will not grant him remission of his sins. Without revelation it is impossible to resolve this painful doubt. Religion speaks to us of "the Lamb who taketh away the sin of the world," and reminds us of the parable of the prodigal son, of Mary Magdalene, of the thief on the cross; and announces to us through the mouth of the priest: "I absolve thee of thy sins." Religion affords also to the dying the grace of perseverance by the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction. Experience teaches, indeed, that a Christian who is strengthened by the sacraments of the dying, departs this life in peace and tranquillity of mind, whilst the infidel and obdurate sinner die with the signs of despair.

II. RELIGION ASSURES THE DYING OF THE IMMORTALITY OF HIS BODY.

1. How does infidelity consider death? It says: "To die

is the greatest loss." The Gentiles roused great lamentations and woeful cries, and the word, *Conclamatum est*, received the meaning, All is lost.

Indeed, our corporeal senses witness the dissolution of the human organism, and its corruption, and are not able to detect a germ of life.—Reason, not enlightened by faith, finds the resurrection of the dead ridiculous. When St. Paul preached it in the Areopagus at Athens, some of the learned men "indeed mocked; but others said: We will hear thee again concerning this matter." Act xvii, 32.

2. Faith teaches the dying: "For me to die is gain." Philip. i, 21. We are taught that death is the necessary passage leading to *glory*, of which we are not capable in this body, which bears upon it the consequence of original sin. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God; neither shall corruption possess incorruption." I Cor. xv, 50.—It is also the passage to resurrection. We believe in the resurrection of the body; our faith being strengthened by the resurrection of Christ and the promises made by him. (Vision of Ezechiel. Simile of the seed of wheat.—Texts of Holy Scripture: Job xix, 25-27. John v, 25. Rom. viii, 11. Apoc. i, 18.)

It is very significant that the civilized gentile nations disposed of their dead by cremation, whilst Christian nations confide the bodies of the departed to the earth as seeds for future resurrection.

III. RELIGION IS LIGHT TO THE SOUL OF THE DYING.

1. Where will my soul go to? Only faith can give a secure answer to this question. For it teaches

a. The immortality of the soul, of which even Socrates did not enjoy a certainty. To be or not to be,—for ever, this is the most important of questions. Let us be thankful to God who by His revelation has destroyed all doubt.

b. The future state, dreadful to him only who despised the living faith here below, is a subject of delightful anticipation

to every pious soul. It is the end of all tribulation, the entry into our Father's house, the vision of our beloved God, the beginning of everlasting joys.

2. What will be my fate there? Whilst infidelity has no consoling answer, religion teaches:

a. God the loving Father has prepared eternal mansions for his children wandering through the desert of this life. Jesus awaits us, who promised not to reject his own, and who offers up his merits to the Heavenly Father. The Holy Ghost "asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." Rom. viii, 26.

b. The Elect await us: Mary the queen of heaven, all angelic choirs, the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, etc.; our dear ones. What a reception!

Peroration: O unspeakable consolation of religion! O devilish cruelty of those who attempt to deprive the poor human heart of this only true consolation! O blindness of those who seek consolation where it is not to be found! Therefore love your religion, endeavor to augment your knowledge of it. Let its beneficial spirit permeate your life; live up to its commands, and your devotion to it will wonderfully increase. "If any man will do the will of him (of God) he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be from God, or whether I speak from myself." John vii, 17.

Bishop Galura.

VI.

ON SUPERSTITION.

The poor woman of whom to-day's Gospel speaks, had "suffered many things from many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing the better, but rather worse." (Mt. v, 26.) Now she was enlightened to seek aid from Jesus, by touching the hem of his garment. Our Saviour far from reproaching her, said: "Take courage, daughter; thy faith has made thee whole." Now-a-days this woman would have been charged with gross

superstition by people of *enlightened mind*, because she expected aid by touching His garment. On the other hand, we sometimes meet even Christians, who, instead of going to Jesus, seek aid by superstitious means. I will therefore address you on the sin of superstition.

1. We sin by superstition, when we honor God or the Saints in a manner contrary to the doctrine or practice of the Church.

The Holy Church has been commissioned by God to teach us all truth; consequently, she alone is able to tell us how God demands to be worshiped. Therefore when our devotions are contrary to the doctrine or practice of the Church, they are superstitious. It would, for instance, be superstition to suppose, that a prayer, in order to be efficacious, must needs be said on a particular day, at a particular hour, in a particular place or posture, and a particular number of times. But it is not superstitious to say five Our Fathers in honor of the five wounds of Jesus, or three in honor of the Blessed Trinity, etc.

2. We sin, further, by superstition, when we attribute to things a certain power which they cannot have, either by nature or by the prayers of the Church, or by virtue of divine dispensation.

All those are guilty of this sin, who

a. Attempt to acquire knowledge and science by certain words and signs, or by certain prayers and fasts.

b. Those who without employing the natural means, attempt to cure diseases, or to expel temporal evils. This kind of superstition is discerned, when unknown names of angels or spirits are invoked; or when certain foolish circumstances accompany the prayer. It would be superstition to believe that, in order to rid yourself of a fever, it was necessary to say on the first day, nine Paters and Aves, on the second, eight; on the third, seven, etc. It is superstitious to employ means in order to produce an effect which they evidently cannot produce; or to expect the effect of a healing herb from insignificant circumstances, as for instance, that it was dug up at a certain hour.

c. Those who attribute to incidental circumstances a significance which they cannot have. When thirteen persons are at dinner table, it is said, that one of them will die in the course of the year. He who is born on the first of April will die a violent death, because Judas, it is said, hanged himself on that day. To begin an enterprise on a Friday, means to fail, as people say. This kind of superstition was so much in vogue among the Gentiles that the wise men among them ridiculed it. Thus Cato replied to some one who asked, whether it had any significance that his boots were nibbled by mice: "No, my friend; that signifies nothing; but it would signify something, if the mice were nibbled by your boots."

3. Again, we sin by superstition, when we attempt to learn secret things under outspoken, or implicit, invocation of the evil spirit. This kind of superstition is called sooth-saying, and appears under various forms:

a. *Astrology*, which must be well distinguished from astronomy, is fortune-telling by observing the constellations. Astrology is evidently superstitious. For God gave the stars no power over our free will; nor does he interrupt their natural course for the sake of every individual.—It cannot be denied, however, that according to the will of God certain signs appeared in heaven, that they might foreshadow future catastrophes. Such signs were seen by all Jews shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, and will be seen by mankind shortly before the consummation of the world.

b. *Augury* is when men attempt to foretell future events concerning individuals, from certain cries and motions of birds and other animals. Thus many believe, that the howling of dogs or owls foretells death in the vicinity. What folly! Do animals know the future, or are they enlightened by God, as the prophets were enlightened?—But animals frequently announce by their motions, cries, and other signs, the weather, the coming of spring or winter, etc. They announce these and similar natural events by virtue of their natural instinct; wherefore it is no sin to observe these signs.

c. *Interpretation of dreams.* Although, in some few

cases, God has spoken to men by dreams, yet most dreams are the effect of natural causes; and therefore it would be foolish to consider them as messengers of God. "Dreams have deceived many: and they have failed that put their trust in them." Ecclus. xxxiv, 7.

d. Cutting cards. This is of frequent occurrence in our *enlightened* age and country. A foolish thing! How can cards announce to us what the wisdom of all men does not know? No one will be so bold as to say, that God instructs his children by cards.

4. Superstition is a grievous sin. "The soul that shall go aside after magicians, and sooth-sayers, I will set my face against that soul and destroy it out of the midst of its people." Levit. xx, 6. God will, accordingly, if you sin by superstition, turn his face from you, by refusing his grace and blessing, and will exclude you, if you die in this sin, out of the number of his Saints.

The reason is, because commonly the help of the devil is sought for, in spite of all protestations. You know that by cutting cards, etc., the future cannot be known according to Divine Providence. Consequently, if you attempt to explore the future nevertheless by this means, you attempt to make use of the power of the devil, that is, of God's enemy. Therefore you act as one who denies God, since you say by your actions: "Since God will not comply with my wishes, I will seek aid from his worst enemy, the devil."

Sometimes sacred names are pronounced, and prayers said, which induces some Christians to suppose that the art is not sinful. But when the devil tempted the Lord, did he not quote the Scripture? And when people curse, do they not use sacred names? The devil, says St. Chrysostom, mixes honey and poison, by adding sacred names to superstitious practices.

Peroration: If it should seem difficult to you to abstain from superstition, especially in time of sickness, remember that you will come to him in the next life whom you trusted in this. Even if you could recover your health by such superstitious means—in reality temporal death is often caused by them—what would it profit you, if you gain a long life, nay the whole world?

J. E. Zollner.

Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost.

V.

ETERNITY OF THE PAINS OF HELL.

The eternal Judge will say to those on his left hand: "Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire." A dreadful sentence! The punishment will be everlasting. A truth abhorred by sinful man, derided by infidelity, but clearly contained in Revelation.

I. THE ETERNITY OF THE PUNISHMENT IN HELL IS A CERTAIN TRUTH.

1. It is the faith of all nations, not only of the civilized nations of olden times, but also of the tribes of Africa and America. Theseus king of Athens is represented as chained to a rock for ever. The liver of Tityus is for ever devoured by two vultures. Tantalus suffers burning thirst; when he opens his lips to drink the water which almost touches his lips, it is removed from him. Sisyphus is eternally doomed to roll a heavy rock up the steep slope of a mountain, which for ever rolls back upon him ere it reaches the summit, etc. Hades is bounded by a river that cannot be re-crossed.

Now that to which *all nations* bear testimony, has at least powerful testimony to its truth.

2. It is the clear doctrine of Revelation. The reprobate are to depart from the Lord into everlasting fire; they shall go into everlasting punishment. Mt. xxv, 41, 46. The fire in hell cannot be quenched. The worm dieth not. Mt. ix, 43, 44. "The chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire." Lk. iii, 17.

The words of the Apostles are no less awful. "The smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever." Apoc. xiv, 11. St. Paul says of the reprobate, that they "shall suffer eternal pains in destruction, from the face of the Lord." II Thess. i, 9.

Knowing that this doctrine would be a stumbling-block to many, our Lord repeated it again and again. The devil himself

bears testimony to it, when he says: "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Mt. viii, 29. He distinguishes between their present punishment and the punishment that is to follow when time shall be no more.

II. IT IS NOT AGAINST REASON.

Human wisdom, which is "foolishness before God," attempts to represent the above words of Holy Scripture as mere threats by which God endeavors to keep the wicked from their wickedness, without ever intending to inflict upon them so awful a punishment.

Not to mention that such an explanation is an insult to the truth of God, I invite your attention to history; which testifies, that whenever the sinful race did not do penance, God executed his threats. Sodom and Gomorrha. The Jews in the Babylonian and Assyrian captivity, the destruction of Jerusalem, etc.

Moreover, the doctrine of the eternity of punishment is rather in conformity with human reason than opposed to it.

1. God is substantial holiness and justice. Therefore as he loves virtue for ever, so he hates sin for ever, and punishes it wherever he finds it. But the sinner is burdened with his sin for ever, because, for him, there is neither grace nor time anymore.

2. The glory of Jesus Christ the Son of God demands, that he should triumph over the wicked for all eternity. His victory over the enemies of his kingdom must be perfect, and therefore eternal. If Nero, Julian and other enemies of Christ could one day, say after millions of years, join the victory of Jesus and his Saints, and could share their glory, they would adore God no longer as the Holy God.

3. If no eternal punishment awaited mankind, there was no necessity for redemption; for creatures themselves are able to satisfy a temporal punishment. Moreover, if there is no everlasting hell, the redemption never took place. For in that case, Jesus Christ could have redeemed us only from temporal punishment. But we know from the testimony of experience that tem-

poral punishment still weighs heavily upon us, such as diseases and death.

4. By sin we are separated from God, with whom we should be united as the branch with the vine. After death this union cannot be re-established, because it is the night when no one can work. Therefore the sinner will be, by his own guilt, the uprooted tree that fell into eternity.

To assert that the sinner will be cleansed from his sins in the next world is equivalent to maintaining the monstrous proposition, that God will force the worst criminals, and the most wicked one of all—the devil—to become converted.

III. IT IS A TERRIBLE DOCTRINE ON WHICH WE SHOULD OFTEN REFLECT.

1. Let us often reflect on the doctrine of everlasting punishment, as a preservative against sin. It would seem to be impossible to sin in the presence of hell. Dives thought that if his five brothers could be convinced, by a special messenger being sent to them, of the everlasting punishment awaiting the unholy, they could not but amend their lives. Lk. xvi, 27.

How great is the number of those whom fear alone has induced to decide for God and virtue! True, fear is not the noblest motive, but it is a salutary motive nevertheless. Our Saviour himself says: "Fear not those that kill the body, and cannot kill the soul; but rather fear Him that can destroy both body and soul in hell." Mt. x, 28. Many a one whom the gentle dew and the bright sunshine remind not of God, are reminded of him by the thunders and the storms.

2. Constant reflection on this doctrine will impart to the just the grace of perseverance. Even holy souls need to be warned by the voice of fear. "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate." I Cor. ix, 27. No sanctity is so exalted, as to be exempt from the possibility of a fall. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but having cast them down into the place of torments, delivered them into the chains

of hell to be tormented, to be reserved unto judgment." II Pet. ii, 4. St. Jerome, St. Francis Xavier and other Saints trembled at the thought of hell, and were thus strengthened in humility.

Peroration: Let this wholesome fear accompany our whole life. "Many are called, but few are chosen." "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way, which leadeth to life; and few there are who find it." Let both the light of heaven, and the fire of hell, be the guides along our path of life.

J. Ehrler.

VI.

THE SIN OF IMPURITY AN ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION.

The Jews caused their own ruin by the murder of their Messias; they destroyed this living temple of God, and by their many vices desecrated the temple built of stone. Our soul, even our body, are temples of God. Although by every sin this temple is desecrated, yet no vice deserves more to be called an abomination of desolation than the vice of impurity. I will address you on this subject, because we see in the Jews and their sad history figures of the unhappy condition of the slaves of impurity.

I. IMPURITY DESOLATES WHATEVER IS GOOD AND GREAT IN MAN.

1. *It desolates the gifts of fortune.*

a. As the temple at Jerusalem was richly adorned from outside, so God gave to man eternal goods. But by impurity he is robbed of them. The prodigal son dissipated all his substance and was in want. "He that maintaineth harlots, shall squander away his substance." Prov. xxix, 3.

b. The pre-eminence of the temple at Jerusalem resembles the lordship bestowed by God upon man over the visible creation. But impurity deprives him of this exalted position, renders him despicable, and degrades him to the level of the brute. Nabuchodonosor had given himself to the concupiscence

of the flesh, when the word of the Lord was announced to him: "Let his heart be changed from man's; and let a beast's heart be given him." Dan. iv, 13.

c. As the temple at Jerusalem had a solid structure, so God gave man a healthy body. But impurity deprives him of health and strength, and causes diseases and, in many cases, premature death. "A diligent woman is a crown to her husband; and she that doeth things worthy of confusion, is rottenness in his bones." Prov. xii, 4. "God himself, although he can do all things, is not able to restore to a fallen virgin her virginity." St. Jerome.

2. *It desolates the gifts of nature.*

a. Forty years were consumed in building the temple. Nature consumes a lifetime in forming the spirit that is within man. But impurity changes, so to speak, the spirit into flesh. "My spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh." Gen. vi, 3.

b. The temple at Jerusalem was a house of prayer, destined for the sublimest acts of religion. But the Jews made it a "den of thieves."—Thus man's intellect is so blinded by impurity, as to be actuated only by instincts, like a brute.

3. *It desolates the gifts of grace.*

a. Impurity robs man of heaven, of the vision and possession of God. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor sodomites shall possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. vi, 9.

b. Impurity destroys the temple of God in man. "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God (which is done especially by impurity), him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are." I Cor. iii, 16. "All is lost. Ever since you lost the treasure of chastity, you are no longer the temple of God, but the abominable abode of the devil." St. Ambrose.

c. Impurity deprives works that are good in themselves of their value and merits. "As rottenness deprives an apple of

its beauty, color, scent and value, so this sin deprives the soul of beauty, of the value of grace, of the good odor of good examples, and of all her splendor." St. Bonaventure.

d. It deprives of faith. Who are the infidels? Who were those that created schisms and heresies in the Church? Sensual men.

II. IMPURITY CALLS DIVINE VENGEANCE UPON THE HEAD OF ITS SLAVE.

1. *God destroys kingdoms because of this vice.*

a. As the abomination of desolation caused the utter destruction of the Jewish kingdom, so the vice of impurity caused the destruction of mankind by the deluge. Gen. vii.

b. As Jerusalem was destroyed by fire, so God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha by raining fire from heaven, because the cry of their lewdness was grown loud before the Lord. Gen. xix, 13.

c. As houses and families were destroyed at Jerusalem, so God destroys whole families and nations because of impurity. "O impurity! through thee peace is destroyed, murder perpetrated; through thee cities have been consumed by fire, and nearly all evils introduced." St. Augustine.

2. *God deprives the impure sinner of the heavenly kingdom.*

a. The Jews have no longer a Jerusalem, a Sion, nor any city or kingdom. To the slave of impurity there is no celestial Jerusalem, no heaven, any longer. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. xv, 50.

b. The Jews were deprived of the Ark of the Covenant, of altar, sacrifice, and priest. The impure sinner has no part with God, with Jesus the High-Priest, with his atoning Blood, with his Sacrifice. He is disinherited.

3. *The impure sinner deprives himself of the hope of redemption.*

a. The Jews fell into the hands of their enemies, either to die the most horrible deaths, or to be sold into the ignominious slavery. God delivers the impure sinner to the most cruel

enemy,—Satan—from whose thralldom he will never be rescued. As the Jews forfeited the hope for a Messias, so the impure have forfeited the hope of a saviour.

b. Countless multitudes of the Jews were hacked to pieces, and their bowels searched for swallowed gold. God torments impure sinners by a worm that dieth not (Mk. ix, 43); and will turn that which captivated their minds into never-ending anguish.

c. As many of the Jews perished in the flames, without being able to save themselves, so the fornicator will be tormented by an eversalting fire, without hope of redemption. The portion of fornicators shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone. Apoc. xxi, 8.

III. SALVATION IS HARDLY POSSIBLE FOR THE IMPURE.

The necessary conditions of conversion are: abandonment of the sin, penance, and grace.

1. The fornicator is generally unwilling to forsake his own vice.

a. If the Jews had ceased revolting, their lives might have been spared.

b. If the impure sinner would forsake his sins, he would have made the first step toward his salvation. But allured by his own concupiscence, and by external occasions, he commits sins repeatedly. Thus sin becomes customary with him. "All other external sins are easier overcome; but to forsake the habit of fornication, is, so to speak, impossible." St. Jerome.

2. He is not willing to do penance.

a. The Jews could have saved themselves by doing timely penance. But their hearts were unmoved either by exhortations and warning, or by threats.

b. To the slave of impurity this vice seems to be an insurmountable obstacle to conversion. He either despairs of ever doing penance, or defers it until his death-bed. Thus his vice grows within him, and plunges him into ruin.

3. The impure sinner is not willing to use the grace offered to him.

a. The Jews could have saved themselves by accepting the conditions offered to them by Titus. But by rejecting them, they made their utter ruin inevitable.

b. As long as the fornicator enjoys strength and health, he is unwilling to co-operate with grace, in consequence of which God will deprive him of it at last. How few are the impure sinners, who on their death-bed become truly converted! "Impurity is that vice, which one does not easily abandon; wherefore it is the sure ruin of the young." St. Thomas Aquinas.

Peroration: Let us, then, ever abhor a sin that causes such abomination of desolation. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable sacrifice." Rom. xii, 1.

Occasional Sermons.

SKETCHES OF EXHORTATIONS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY.

BY P. BECKX.

ZEAL IN VENERATING THE MOTHER OF GOD.

(*Introduction on the eve of the first of May.*)

In order to animate our zeal in venerating the Mother of God, it is advisable to reflect on the relation existing between Mary and ourselves. Mary is

I. *Our Queen.*

1. "O my Queen having dominion over me, and Mother of my Lord!" St. Ildephonse. As Mother of the Lord, she is the queen of angels and men.

2. We are her servants. It is the duty of a servant to serve faithfully, and thus to obtain the complacency of his superiors. But Mary demands: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." John ii, 5.

II. *Our Advocate.*

1. "Thou art the most powerful, the singular Advocate for the sinners." St. Ephrem. The Church invokes her as "Refuge of sinners," and "Comforter of the afflicted."

2. We are her clients. Clients endeavor to interest their advocate in their cause.—Are we not exceedingly wicked and miserable? In our misery, the intercession of Mary is very desirable, that we may find grace in the eyes of her Son, our Judge.

III. *Our Mother.*

1. "She is the mother of the members of Christ." St. Augustine. As Christians we are members of Jesus Christ.—Where is a mother so amiable, so gracious, and so kind, as Mary is to us?

2. We are her children. What well-trained child would not seize every opportunity to show his love and reverence for his mother?—Now this opportunity is offered us. Let us devote to her this month by daily devotional practices, by meditation, spiritual reading, and good works, in her honor; and by imitating her bright virtues.

Menne.

I.

MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN.

The first reason is, because she is eminently the daughter of the eternal Father, as a consequence

I. *Of her creation.*

1. The Holy Church applies to her the words: "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures." Ecclus. xxiv, 5. Accordingly, Mary must occupy the first place among all creatures. Predestinated from all eternity to conceive and bear the Son of the eternal Father, it was decorous for her as mother of such a son to be exempt from all contamination of sin. The eternal Father created her, therefore, in a state free from sin.

2. But in us,—what is there to distinguish us from others?

Are our works such as to distinguish us from the children of the world, and from sinners; or from infidels and heretics? Are we not the very opposite of children of God.

II. *Of her Adoption.*

1. As adopted daughter Mary received all graces and all privileges behoving the daughter of such a father. "Full of grace."—But she would not have been the worthy daughter of the holy God, unless she had been herself holy.

2. As for us, we are by nature children of wrath, but by baptism we have been adopted children of God. How have we heretofore estimated this grace? Have we never dishonored this dignity of divine filiation by unworthy lives?

III. *Of her Redemption.*

1. The grace of Redemption was imparted to Mary in such a manner that she was preserved from all sin, through the merits of Jesus; yet, also, by the Father and the Holy Ghost. Therefore she was foretold as the woman who was to crush the Serpent's head.

2. Do we also crush the head of the Serpent by firmly resisting temptations? Or has the devil overcome us in consequence of our own negligence? If we only be of good will, Mary will obtain for us the grace necessary for our conversion.

II.
MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN.

The second reason is, because she is predestinated to be the *Mother of God.* As such she was preserved from all sin.

I. *Because of her dignity.*

1. Her dignity, as the Mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, is so exalted that, save the infinite divine majesty, no dignity can equal it. Consequently, it was necessary for her to be possessed of a purity surpassed by the purity of God only. "Thou art all fair, O my love; and there is not a spot in thee." Cant. iv, 7.

2. Our own dignity is so exalted that we can never value it

as much as it deserves: our dignity conferred on us (*a.*) by baptism as brethren and sisters of Jesus Christ: (*b.*) by Holy Communion, in the most intimate union with Jesus Christ; and (*c.*) acquired by fulfilling the will of God, according to the word of the Lord: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and *mother*." Mt. xii, 50.

II. *Because of her merits.*

1. "Many daughters have gathered together riches: thou hast surpassed them all." Prov. xxxi, 29. Mary, by a faithful co-operation with grace, has surpassed all other Saints as regards merits. But grace is always in proportion to the merits acquired. Consequently the graces imparted to the Mother of God must have surpassed the graces of all other Saints, as well as of Jeremias and of John the Baptist, who were sanctified in their mother's womb.

2. How numerous and great are the graces for which we owe thanks! That according to their measure our merits would increase! "He who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings." II Cor. ix, 6.

III. *Because of the homage due to her.*

1. Mary was to be exalted by her divine Son above all human beings, above all the choirs of the blessed spirits, and to be crowned as queen of heaven and earth. A good son is intent upon guarding the honor of his mother. Therefore the Son of God could not suffer his Mother to be, although only for one moment, the slave of the devil and of sin.

2. How displeasing it must be to God to hear Satan boast of our voluntarily being his slaves! "Man when he was in honor did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them." Ps. xliii, 13.

III.
MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN.

The third reason is, because she was the chosen bride of the Holy Ghost, who enriched her,

I. *Proportionately to his bounty.*

1. A bridegroom can refuse nothing to his beloved bride. Mary could not desire anything more fervently than to be found quite fair and pure in the eyes of her heavenly bridegroom. She has obtained this as the Immaculate.

2. Do we also regard purity as our first and fairest adornment? The bridegroom feeds among lilies; these lilies being among thorns (Cant. ii, 2), must be protected (*a.*) by humility; (*b.*) by mortification of our senses; (*c.*) by retirement from the friendship of the world; and (*d.*) by zeal in praying, and in receiving the Holy Sacraments.

II. *Proportionate to his liberality.*

1. The riches of the bridal gifts are a pre-eminent point of honor on the part of a rich and liberal bridegroom. Abraham's servant in the house of Bathuel. Gen. xxiv, 53, ff. In what manner then did the Holy Ghost show his infinite liberality? What is the best bridal attire of a virgin?

2. How liberal is the Holy Ghost toward us! What use have we hitherto made of his graces?

III. *Proportionate to his sanctity.*

1. Sanctity is the characteristic feature of whatever bears a close relationship to God. But Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost. It is because of this most intimate relation that Mary was perfectly holy.

2. Our lives are also in the closest relationship to God. Are they holy lives, worthy of God?

IV.

THE BIRTH OF MARY.

Heaven rejoiced at the birth of Mary; for the blessed spirits knew this moment to be the commencement of the most joyful events for heaven.

I. *Their ranks were to be recruited.*

1. Mary was destined to furnish to the Eternal Word the precious life that was to be sacrificed on the Cross for the salva-

tion of the Elect by whom the mansions of the once holy, but now reprobate angels, were to be occupied, in the blessed city of God.

2. God wills not that one be lost. The Son of God is come that all should have life everlasting. He has ascended into heaven to prepare a mansion for everyone of us. He gives everyone the necessary grace, wherefore our salvation depends on our co-operation. Let us for the purpose of obtaining our eternal destiny invoke with faithfulness and perseverance the Blessed Virgin, the *gate of heaven.*

II. *The glory of heaven was to increase.*

1. What renders heaven more glorious?—A God-Man. A virginal Mother of God!—Innumerable multitudes of holy children of God, who praise the Triune God from everlasting to everlasting.

2. We all are called and destined to glorify God. Oh! that our lives might be such, that their beginnings, as the germs of faithful trees, may be blessed by the angels of heaven!—Are our present lives a life for the honor of God?

III. *The joy of heaven was augmented.*

1. Great must have been the joys of the holy angels, when they saw her, on earth, who had been chosen, from all eternity, to be their queen, the Mother of God, and the most perfect of all creatures.

2. Let us also foster in our hearts an ardent desire to behold and admire Mary as our queen in heaven, to venerate and love her with the angelic hosts. St. Stanilas Koska, shortly before his death, gave vent to this ardent desire of his loving heart in the most affecting words.

V.

THE BIRTH OF MARY.

The earth had far more reason to rejoice at the birth of Her who, as the rising dawn, announced the approaching Sun of justice. She was to the earth

I. *The most faithful co-operatrix in the work of redemption.*

1. Mary was predestined to bear the Saviour of mankind, to sacrifice him to the Heavenly Father for the salvation of all, and to suffer and to die in her heart when the great sacrifice of atonement was immolated. But men did not see that their salvation was at hand.

2. Alas! there are still many hearts given to indifference, or even to aversion, to the Christian religion! They love the darkness rather than light. *Profer lumen cœcis.*

II. *The all-powerful advocate.*

1. Mary, as the Mother of the Redeemer, regards all men as her own. She best knows how to value the price of our redemption. Hence her incessant intercession for us, that no one may be lost.

2. What might have become of us hitherto if Mary had not protected us? Recollect, however, that she intercedes for us that we might amend our lives. *Sumat per te preces, etc.*

III. *The tenderest mother of all.*

1. She is this, because, (*a.*) through Jesus she has given us a new life, the life of grace and immortality, whilst the life which we received from Eve, the mother of all, confers only death on us; because (*b.*) Jesus has given her to us as mother, and has recommended us as children to her solicitude. *Monstra te esse matrem.*

2. Are those features by which we may be known as children of such a mother found in our souls? Grant that I may show myself as Thy son.

VI.

THE BIRTH OF MARY.

Hell was terrified, when she appeared who was to crush the head of the Serpent.

I. *Mary combated against hell.*

1. She is the Judith of the new covenant, who fights against the infernal Holofernes. She is the tower of David. Through

this "Virgin most powerful" those whom Satan considered as powerless have become invincible.

2. Do we also by our strength and perseverence terrify hell? Or do we delight the evil spirits by yielding to their temptations?

III. *Mary conquered hell.*

1. With her to combat is to overcome. Her very name, most delightful to the good angels and to holy men, is dreaded by the devil and his angels. She has overcome all sins and heresies, as the Church says.

2. Behold, whose aid you should implore in this your earthly life, which, according to Job, is a continual warfare upon earth.

III. *She disarms hell.*

1. She has set her foot upon the neck of her enemy. She took, through her Son, the armour from the strong-armed. She ever continues to deliver thousands and thousands of the slaves of the devil from their ignominious fetters, and to lead their souls triumphantly into the eternal kingdom of light.

2. You sometimes complain that your temptations are too vehement. If you succumb, it is through your own fault. For it has never been heard that any one who took his refuge in the protection of Mary was ever lost. *Ave Maris stella.*

VII.

THE PRESENTATION OF MARY.

The heroic virtue of Mary, manifested in her secluded life in the temple, will appear, by reflecting on the following truths:

I. *What did she leave?*

1. She left her holy parents, whom she loved with the tenderest love, both natural and supernatural, as soon as the vow made by them, and the will of God, was made known to her. She devotes herself to the service in the temple and thereby reigns the purest and holiest of filial joys.

2. Blush, O Christian soul! To give up certain engagements, certain companionship, which are far from being holy, no heroism would be required, but the commonest and most necessary virtue. Still you have not even for this sufficient virtue.

II. *When did she leave?*

1. She had scarcely attained the age of four, when she made so trying a sacrifice.—The grace of the Holy Ghost, as St. Gregory says, knows no delay.

2. How is it with us? Most of us are perhaps obliged to sigh with Augustine: "Late have I known thee, late have I loved thee, O ever new and ancient beauty. O unhappy time when I did not love thee!" or with the same: "Such a little boy I was, and so great a sinner!"

III. *Why did she leave?*

1. She left actuated by the purest and most ardent love of God, to whom she devoted herself without any restriction, severing herself from all connections with the world, in which she did not want to possess anything, in order that she might love God alone. And thus the holy child ascended the steps leading to the temple with a speed and joy that astonished all.

2. If we compare our love, our desires, and our sacrifices with hers, what a contrast! We say a great many times: "I renounce the world, I will serve God alone." But at the same time, we revoke our vows by refusing to accept what God has decreed for us.

VIII.

THE PRESENTATION OF MARY.

In the presentation of Mary we admire

I. *Her liberality.*

1. She sacrificed to God not only her parents and her home, but also herself,—her body with its senses, her soul with all her faculties. She fulfilled to such a perfection as no other creature ever did the first commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart," etc.

2. Mary's conduct is a severe reproach to those who have their hearts divided between God and the world; who praise God in the churches, and, outside, pander to the world and the devil.

II. *The joy of her heart.*

1. All the joys of the children of the world are as nothing in comparison with the heavenly cheerfulness and delight which illuminated the countenance of the Blessed Virgin, when the words of her holy ancestor were fulfilled in her: "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord." Ps. cxxi, 1. "Better is one day in thy courts above thousands." Ps. lxxxiii. 11.

2. And we are so prone to become impatient in our few exercises of devotion, and in our daily tribulations. We demand, so to say, our wages immediately in the form of sweet consolations.

III. *Her zeal.*

1. Zeal is generally proportionate to knowledge. How ardent then must have been the zeal of the *Wisest of Virgins*, who was continually absorbed in meditation on divine truths!

2 Lukewarmness. This deplorable state of the soul, would not imperil our salvation, if, by continually meditating on the eternal truths, we would drive it from us.

IX.

THE PRESENTATION OF MARY.

Let us admire in Mary her perseverance and progress in virtue during her long stay in the temple:

I. *With regard to God.*

1. As the morning dawn continually increases in brightness, until the sun appears, so Mary increased in the love of God, and in all other virtues, by perfecting the intention of her actions, and by the strict observance of her daily duties. "Her whole life was an uninterrupted practice of the purest love of

God; and when sleep closed her eyes, her heart was awake and continued praying." St. Ambrose.

2. Are we intent upon progressing in divine love? Or is, perhaps, our life a continual change of falling and rising? Is it a seeming stand-still, which is inevitably a going back? He who does not come forward on the steep hill leading to heaven, must fall back. Yet we are commanded to be perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect.

II. *With regard to our neighbor.*

1. Whilst Mary aided her young companions in all their needs, and encouraged and consoled them, her charitable acts and exhortations tended to enkindle and preserve in their hearts the fire of divine love.

2. Active charity, united with amiable and modest zeal for souls, is the characteristic feature of the true disciples of our Lord.—What are our intentions in our conversations with our fellow-men, especially with our acquaintances, companions, and friends?

III. *With regard to ourselves.*

1. Although full of grace, and in no danger of falling, the Blessed Virgin watched herself with severe solicitude; and preserved her exuberant treasure of grace by humility, retirement, and self-denial.

2. And you, surrounded by human frailties, are rash enough to expose your superficial virtue to obvious dangers, and dance upon the brink of perdition?

X.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

Mary's dignity as Mother of God is infinitely exalted

I. *In the order of nature.*

1. As true mother of the eternal Word who was made flesh, she entered into the most intimate relation with God, such as was never before granted to any other creature.

2. She deigns also to be the mother of the sinner, having an ardent desire that all enmity between her divine Son and the sinful sons of Adam may cease, and be replaced by everlasting friendship and love.

II. *In the order of grace.*

1. By virtue of her maternal dignity, Mary obtained a certain control over the treasures of grace stored up in the hands of her divine Son; for "God will give us all things through Her through whom he gave us his Son." St. Bernard.

2. Why is it that, poor and wretched as we are, we do not implore with greater zeal and confidence the aid of this "Virgin most powerful—of this mother so rich in grace and bounty?"

III. *In the order of glory.*

1. If eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, what God has prepared for all those who love him: who can conceive in his mind the glory conferred upon the Mother of God by the Most Blessed Trinity? "The queen stood on the right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety." Ps. xliv, 10.

2. What confidence, what consolation, what delight, to be a true and zealous child of this queen of heaven, and as such to depart this life!

XI.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

Let us reflect on the prerogatives which rendered Mary worthy above all the daughters of Eve to be the Mother of God.

I. *Prerogatives of her body.*

1. Not to mention other prerogatives of the "Blessed among women," Mary was the first to devote to God her virginity. How delightful in the eyes of the Lord who "feeds among lilies," was the mirculous purity of the Virgin and Mother most chaste!

2. But what abomination is in his eyes all impurity where-

by the body of the Christian, the temple of the Holy Ghost, is so often contaminated!

II. *Prerogatives of her heart.*

1. Her heart was the receptacle of all virtues and perfections, especially of humility, which imparts particular splendor to all other virtues. Greeted by an angel's tongue, at the command of God, as "full of grace," she claims no title for herself, but that of a "handmaid of the Lord."

2. What are eternal splendor and corporal beauty in comparison with the treasures of a noble heart? But the foundation of nobility of heart is humility, which like a magnet attracts the grace of God and the love of men, whilst pride is repulsive to God and man alike.

III. *Prerogatives of her mind.*

1. Her strong faith, her ardent desire, her fervent prayers, call the eternal Word, the Desired of nations, from heaven to take a human soul and body in her virginal womb.

2. Following her example, let us strive to strengthen our faith, to long for the conversion of infidels and sinners, and to do our part in accomplishing this desired end.

XII.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

When we hear Mary say: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" we are reminded

I. *Of the divine bounty.*

1. With the same graciousness with which God had accepted her virginal vow, he does not hesitate to explain to her how she was to remain a virgin, and yet to become a mother.

2. Let us learn from Mary to listen to the divine inspirations, and to acquiesce in the will of God, although we may not see the end to be obtained.

II. *Of the divine omnipotence.*

1. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power

of the Most High shall overshadow thee. No word shall be impossible with God." O wonder of wonders!

2. Is not the all-powerful God with us in every condition of life? Is the arm of the Lord shortened? Why then are we so often given to pusillanimity?

III. *Of the divine wisdom.*

1. In order to protect the honor of the Virgin and to take care of the Mother and the Child, St. Joseph was chosen to be her spouse, and the foster-father of the Child.

2. From the election and exaltation of this humble carpenter we learn what are the qualities held in highest estimation in the kingdom of God. The world thinks and choses differently. Let the Spirit of God, let faith and religion, be our guides in all things.

XIII.

THE VISITATION.

"Mary, rising up in those days, went into the mountainous country with haste, into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth." Lk. i, 39. This journey of the Blessed Virgin is very instructive.

I. *The motive of the journey.*

1. It is at the instigation of the Holy Ghost that Mary rose up, solely to bring consolation to the house of Elizabeth, and, by her divine Child, to contribute to the salvation of men. She leaves her cherished solitude, to go where charity, inseparable from divine love, called her.

2. What are the motives which induce us to avoid solitude, and seek society?

II. *The hardships of the journey.*

1. Not regarding the feebleness of her sex, nor the tender constitution of her body, the Blessed Virgin undertakes the long journey to the city of Hebron, which was to be reached along rough roads, over a mountainous country.

2. We are deterred by the least difficulties from charitable

works. Such charity is dead, in a similar manner as faith without works is dead.

III. *The speediness of the journey.*

1. "Mary went with haste," as the Gospel says expressly. Thereby she corresponded with the intention of Jesus to sanctify speedily his precursor.

2. The spirit of tardiness and tepidity is not from God. Without zeal no virtue!

XIV.
THE VISITATION.

Our reflections on the visit itself lead us to admire in the Blessed Virgin

I. *Her modesty.*

1. She offers her services to her cousin Elizabeth, by far her inferior. When she hears the salutation out of her cousin's mouth, she attributes all to God alone, in the wonderful *Magnificat*, which we may call the ecstasy of her humility.

2. Are we sensible how beautiful and how meritorious is humility in honor, and how detestable pride, especially in lowness? Renew frequently the good intention:—"All for the honor of God!"

II. *Her edifying conversation.*

1. According to St. Bonaventure, the object of the conversation of these two divine personages was the mutual communication of the mysteries and wonders performed in them by God. How great must have been their mutual edification, how ardent the fire of divine love flashing up anew in their hearts!

2. It is a lamentable fact, that the usual object of conversation is sinful and scandalous. How often is the tongue, this wonderful instrument of speech, abused by shameless or uncharitable words!

III. *The effects of the visit.*

1. At the very moment when the Mother of God entered the house of Elizabeth, John was sanctified in his mother's

womb, and filled with the Holy Ghost, and to Zachary the faculty of speech was restored.

2. Happy abode, family, soul, congregation, into which Mary enters! Let us invoke her that we may receive sanctity of the soul like John, a fervent heart like Elizabeth, and the salutary use of our tongue like Zachary.

XV.
THE VISITATION.

Mary's stay in the house of Elizabeth during three months was full of blessing

I. *To John.*

1. At her entry and salutation John was sanctified in his mother's womb. How much must the protracted stay of the "mother of divine grace," her prayers and merits, have contributed to that high degree of sanctity, in which the holy Precursor was not equaled by any one born of a woman.

2. Blessed are those parents who recommend their children, before they are born, to the protection of Mary, and afterwards train them up for her holy service.—Let us all be solicitous about innocent youth; for, in most cases, mature age corresponds with the time of youth.

II. *To Elizabeth.*

1. What consolation, what joy, must have been poured out upon the soul of this holy woman, who had so long in her house "the Ark of the Covenant," and conversed with the delight of heaven, and the joy of the Elect.

2. Why is it that we are so negligent in seeking aid and consolation from the Comforter of the Afflicted, and the Help of Christians?

III. *To all members of the household.*

1. Mary gave them all an edifying example, when they saw that she who was the Blessed among women, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; when they saw that she let no occasion escape to do good and bestow favors.

2. What an example for us also! Let us fulfill the exhortation of Jesus: "Whosoever will be the greatest among you, let him be your minister." Mt. xx, 26.

XVI.
THE PURIFICATION.

In this mystery, Mary is to us a model of obedience. The obedience was

I. *Difficult.*

1. She, the purest of virgins, obeyed punctually the law that was not binding upon her, by virtue of which women who had been delivered of a child, had to appear before the priest in the temple for legal purification, it being an acknowledgment of impurity before the Law.

2. Do we not deserve the reproach that we will not obey, except when what is enjoined upon us corresponds with our natural inclinations?

II. *Blind.*

1. Mary, who had conceived by the Holy Ghost, submits to the letter of the Law, which applied only to a conception and birth according to the course of nature. She makes no remark, by which her surpassing dignity might be made known.

2. How prone are we, on the contrary, to make excuses, and exceptions, especially regarding the precepts of the Church!

III. *Magnanimous.*

1. By doing more than duty demanded, she manifested her desire to show her ardent love for God.

2. But how parsimonious are we in our service of God! There is terrible reason for fearing that God will treat us in the same manner we treat him.

XVII.
THE PURIFICATION.

Mary is in her purification a model of profoundest humility. For she concealed

I. *Her virginity.*

1. She would not appear superior to other women, but consented to appear in the eyes of the world, so long as God willed, less pure, than she was in reality.

2. O intolerable pride on our part! We make efforts, sometimes even in the confessional, to appear better than we are; but we are not anxious to improve our morals.

II. *Her sanctity.*

1. As St. Vincent Ferrer remarks, Mary, the purest and holiest of all creatures, implored on her knees the priest to pray for her.

2. Our nominal Catholics find it too burdensome to confess their sins once a year to the priest. "What shall I confess?" they say. "I am neither guilty of theft, nor of murder, nor of adultery."

III. *Her divine maternity.*

1. There was nothing to distinguish her, among sinful mothers, as the Mother of God. But the greater was the delight with which God's eye rested upon his humble handmaid. And because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid, therefore all generations call her blessed.

2. Without humility we can neither please Mary nor her divine Son; who warns us so urgently not to do our good works that we may be seen and praised by men.

XVIII.

THE PURIFICATION.

Mary appears, also, as a model of the most ardent love.

I. *She immolated her divine Son.*

1. She offered up her Jesus, the only delight of her heart, not as a mere ceremony, but as a sacrifice in the strictest sense, that he might suffer and die, and fulfill all that the prophets had foretold concerning him.

2. God demands also of us our dearest treasure, our heart; and he cannot but demand it. But, in spite of all his invitations

and threats, we withdraw it from him to sacrifice it to creatures, even to the most abominable idols of money, lust, etc.

II. *She redeemed him.*

1. With great joy of her heart she offered the sacrifice to have her Jesus returned to her.

2. But we, how much are we willing to sacrifice, in order to possess Jesus? A small alms is often considered as too valuable, when Jesus demands it through the mouth of a needy fellow-man.

III. *She carried him to her abode.*

1. We may easily imagine the heart-felt joy and tenderness with which the blessed Mother carried her Child, and embraced him, and handed him to St. Joseph, that He might be a comforter to him also.

2. Let us endeavor, at least at Holy Communion, to enkindle fervent love in our hearts, and not to squander one moment of that precious time.

XIX.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Mary suffered great sorrows, even at the presentation of her divine Son in the temple:

I. *Concerning Jesus.*

1. She was not able to banish, thenceforth, from her thoughts Simeon's prophetic word, that her Son was set for the ruin of many in Israel, and for a sign which should be contradicted. Incessantly she reflected on his sufferings and persecutions.

2. Oh! that our lives had never been in contradiction with the teaching and life of Jesus, or at least that they might not be n contradiction with them for the future!

II. *Concerning her soul.*

1. A sword pierced her heart, and was not taken out of it during her lifetime. The mere aspect of the Child reminded her of his future sufferings.

2. Let us, with sincere compassion, with contrite and loving hearts, remember the sufferings of Jesus and his blessed Mother. The wounds of Jesus are our salvation.

III. *Concerning all mankind.*

1. According to Simeon's prophecy, Jesus was come to be the resurrection of many, of those who would apply to themselves the merits of his Sacred Passion; but to many he was to be the occasion of greater ruin. This caused a bitter sorrow in Mary's motherly heart, which longed ardently for the salvation of all.

2. What will Jesus be to us? It depends on our own choice. He will be to us salvation and blessing, if we earnestly wish it.

XX.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Great was the sorrow of Mary caused by the loss of her Son in the temple.

I. *The cause of her sorrow.*

1. In Jesus she had lost all that was dear to her. How bitter were her tears!

2. Whenever we commit sin, we also lose, through our own fault, Jesus, our friend and our God. And yet we are not sorrowful after such a loss, but laugh and joke, as though nothing had happened.

II. *The intensity of her sorrow.*

1. Terrible uncertainty! She knew not what was become of her Child, how long she was to be without his presence; whether he had fallen into the hands of his enemies, etc.

2. Is our soul also full of sorrow when we have lost Jesus by sin, or when we are in doubt about his loss? And can our solicitude in seeking him again be compared with our grief on account of temporal losses?

III. *The duration of her sorrow.*

1. Three days and three nights Jesus concealed himself

notwithstanding the unspeakable grief of his Mother, with which she sought him.

2. Do you know why Jesus let his Mother be in this great sadness for so long time? Undoubtedly that he might reward her patience. For the same reason he leaves you in sorrow and sadness. You should profit from the visitations of the Lord.

XXI.
MATER DOLOROSA.

Mary was plunged into an ocean of sorrows at the foot of the Cross

I. *Because of the body of Jesus.*

1. She saw him torn from the top of his head to the foot-sole: his eyes overflowing with bloody tears, his delightful face disfigured and deadly pale, all his limbs out of their joints. As many wounds as she beheld in the body of her Son, as many she perceived in her own heart.

2. Lift up your eyes to the Crucified and blush, because you endeavor so little to crucify your flesh and its concupiscence.

II. *Because of the Heart of Jesus.*

1. She beholds the Heart of her Jesus burning with love for all men, and offered upon the altar of the Cross; but on the part of men she sees only ingratitude, reviling, vinegar and gall.

2. O Mary, grant us to partake of the torments of thy Son, and of thy own. Never, never, may we renew them!

III. *Because of the soul of Jesus.*

1. She beholds him in his anguish, and forsaken by his Father. She beholds him during those hours on the Cross. She hears his pitiful voice, but is not able to relieve him.

2. Thus dies a God-man; thus suffers the Mother of God,—through love for us. And we live to crucify him anew!

XXII.
MARY'S JOYS.

Mary was enraptured with joy at the birth of her Son. For she beheld in him

I. *The Saviour of the world.*

1. Mary knew that the Son of God had come upon earth in order to redeem mankind. Gabriel had announced it to her; the angels manifested it to the shepherds. How great must have been her joy when she embraced the Saviour of the world for the first time.

2. The Saviour came into the world for your sake also. Put all your confidence in him; but co-operate also with his grace. He who created you without you, will not save you without you.

II. *The Teacher of the world.*

1. Mary was the first to hear and follow the doctrine, heretofore unknown to the world, of humility, poverty, mortification,—the doctrine of the Cross.

2. How much progress have we made in the school of the Cross? Are we perhaps of the number of those to whom this doctrine is but a folly?

III. *The pattern of the world.*

1. Mary witnessed with admiration and joy that her divine Son taught in the stable the doctrine of poverty, humility, mortification, etc.

2. We have no more any reason to complain of the hardships connected with the demands of the Christian religion, since our teacher and leader went before us. Let us keep our eyes raised up to him.

XXIII.

MARY'S JOYS.

Her joy on Easter Sunday proceeded from three causes:

I. *The resurrection of her Son.*

1. In proportion to the grief with which she had accompanied Jesus upon Golgotha, her heart was filled with joy when she saw him again resplendent in celestial glory and happiness.

2. Thus it will ever be. The nigher to Jesus in sufferings and self-denial, the nigher to him in joy and transfiguration.

II. *The re-union of the Apostles.*

1. The Apostles were dispersed, like a flock when the shepherd is slain. On the third day, Mary sees them again gathered around their Shepherd, which affords a great consolation to her maternal heart.

2. Often have you saddened the heart of your Mother by separating yourself from Jesus; rejoice, now, her heart, by a sincere return to Jesus and by perseverance in communion with him.

III. *The future resurrection of the faithful.*

1. Mary saw with joy that the resurrection of Jesus would be the pledge of the resurrection of the Elect.

2. Let us live lives worthy of the members of Jesus Christ, that we may partake of the glorification of our Head.

XXIV.

MARY'S JOYS.

Her heart was filled with the sweetest joy on the day of the ascension of her Son, when she reflected

I. *Whither he went.*

1. Jesus ascended into heaven, to take possession of his eternal kingdom; into the house of his Father, the end of his pilgrimage, the place of rest after so many hardships and labors.

2. How insignificant would appear to us the hardships of a virtuous and penitent life if we would ever remember our eternal abode, and long after and strive for it! "O blessed penance," said St. Peter of Alcantara, "that has procured me so great a glory!"

II. *With whom he went.*

1. Mary's joy increased when she saw her Jesus surrounded by a countless escort of holy souls, who had been longing in Limbo for their redemption.

2. Be not solicitous for yourself only. Endeavor, within the sphere of your vocation, to lead many souls to Jesus. Your merits will be great.

III. *Why he went.*

1. Jesus ascended into heaven to prepare a place for his brethren, and especially to erect a throne for his divine Mother, whereon to exalt her above the angelic spirits. How ardent must have been the desire in Mary's heart for the heavenly mansions?

2. How cold are our hearts! Absorbed in earthly cares, and buried in the dust of perishable things, the greater number of men find no time to think of heaven, and would prefer to remain for ever in the land of exile. Let us elevate our mind to higher sentiments.

XXV.

THE LAST YEARS OF MARY'S LIFE.

Mary had her thoughts continually directed

I. *On the Incarnate God.*

1. This mystery, to realize which she had been chosen by the Most Blessed Trinity, was the object of her inmost tenderness and incessant admiration.

2. That which we value and love the most, is the favorite object of our thoughts. Let us examine our conscience to find out what is this cherished object of our mind. Oh! that we would frequently reflect on the sublime sense of the words: "And the Word was made flesh."

II. *On God hidden in the tabernacle.*

1. According to an old tradition, Mary received daily Him whom she had conceived by the Holy Ghost, and who was born of her for our salvation. From the ardent devotion of the Saints in the participation of this adorable Sacrament we may judge of the heavenly love burning in the heart of Mary.

2. We receive the same Lord. But how different is our preparation and devotion!

III. *On God dying on the Cross.*

1. The dolorous scenes of Golgotha were so deeply en-

graven on her maternal heart, that she could not lose sight of them for one moment.

2. By constant meditation on the Sacred Passion we also should seek the most powerful antidote against sins and vices, and the most efficacious exhortation to be zealous in performing all good works.

XXVI.

THE LAST YEARS OF MARY'S LIFE.

What was the favorite object of conversation with the Blessed Mother of God? She conversed

I. *On God.*

1. What the heart thinketh, the mouth speaketh. Since Mary was intimately united with God, and her heart ardent with divine love: on what could she converse with the first Christians but on God? Her words, like rays of heavenly light, penetrated the hearts of all.

2. To converse on God, should be to us a cherished means of increasing in divine charity.

II. *For God.*

1. It seems to be certain that Mary, as a loving Mother of the faithful, sometimes paid visits, but only when charity required it. She went to instruct, console, and exhort them.

2. Although the true Christian may not be at all times conversing about God, yet he never speaks against God, but only so as never to displease him.

II. *With God.*

1. Her entire life was a continual prayer, a continual contemplation. What a privilege to be ever united with God even here below!

2. We feel as if imprisoned, when we pray, although prayer should be our cherished occupation, our light, consolation, and strength; the soul of our life.

XXVII.
THE LAST YEARS OF MARY'S LIFE.

Mary's actions were

I. *Partly those of the active life.*

1. By active life we understand here the care of our neighbor's welfare. Such was the life of Mary the mother of all the disciples of Christ, after the death and ascension of Jesus. She was ever anxious to console, and exhort, and to strengthen in the faith the children of God, so that she is called by the Holy Fathers the first and principal teacher of the Christian religion.

2. How many opportunities are offered us to aid souls who are bought with the precious Blood of Jesus!

II. *Partly those of the contemplative life.*

1. We mean the life employed in meditating on celestial things. Who ever knew, who ever loved, celestial things in such a degree, as Mary did?

2. Which of you is not able to employ daily a small portion of his time in meditating on celestial mysteries; or, at least, to make frequent aspirations to God, and thus to sanctify his life and daily pursuits?

III. *Partly those of the mixed life.*

1. By the sacred bond of charity, contemplation and the care of our fellow-men are united, which union is called the mixed life. Mary, in her prayers, never lost sight of the care of her neighbor; and whilst she was intent upon benefiting her fellow-creatures, she kept her heart directed to God, for whose love she did whatever was done for his children.

2. We never leave God with more profit, than when we seek him in works of charity; and never do we return to God with greater merits and consolation, than after having served him in his needy children.

XXVIII.
THE ASSUMPTION.

Mary's departure from life was the admiration of the Holy Angels

I. *On account of the calmness of her mind.*

1. She departed this life with a calm mind, because her heart had never been attached to the earth. She knew better than any one else the vanity of earthly things.

2. Those whose hearts are attached to earthly things, who trust in the vanities of the world, cannot expect to die a quiet death.

II. *On account of her longing for heaven.*

1. Mary attained the age of about seventy years. How long must have been this time to Her whose heart was in heaven! How welcome was death, how great her delight, when she had but one step to make to reach the object of her ardent desire!

2. Are we not to be pitied, because we love so much this vale of tears, although we are pilgrims, wandering far from our true fatherland?

III. *On account of her divine love.*

1. It is not so much death, as divine charity, that extinguished the flame of Mary's life. The face of the dying Mother of God reflected the fire that was enkindled in her heart.

2. In order that our last breath may be an act of perfect love of God, let us make frequent acts of perfect love during our lifetime.

XXIX.

THE ASSUMPTION.

Mary's entry into heaven was glorious above measure.

I. *The faithful on earth rejoice over the resurrection.*

1. After having with reverence laid the sacred body of the Virgin in a sepulchre, celestial canticles were heard for three days at the sacred shrine. When, after three days, the sepulchre was opened, only the clothing was found. The living Ark of the Covenant had been received into heaven. Who could describe the joy of the faithful at such glad tidings!

2. Let us felicitate our Mother; give thanks to God for

having exalted her above the angels; and implore her to prepare a place for us.

II. *The angels escorted their Queen.*

1. The angelic choirs, singing new canticles, accompanied the *Queen of angels* into the heavenly kingdom.

2. Ask Mary to implore for you the grâce to lead such lives, that your holy guardian angels may lead your souls to heaven immediately after their separation from the body.

III. *Her divine Son met and received her.*

1. Jesus received his blessed Mother, and led her through the angelic choirs and the multitudes of the Elect.

2. Blessed is he who puts all his confidence in Jesus, in life and in death. Whoever accompanies Jesus on his way of the Cross, will be met by Jesus at the gate of heaven.

XXX.
THE ASSUMPTION.

At the coronation of Mary we may distinguish a triple crown:

I. *Her glory before the heavenly court.*

1. In the figurative language of Holy Scripture, the Heavenly Father put the crown of celestial glory upon her head, clothed her with the sun, laid the moon under her feet, placed upon her head a crown of twelve stars, and elevated her as queen of the angels and Saints upon the throne of glory.

2. Let us imitate Mary in her humility. Only when adorned with this virtue, shall we have a right to hope that we shall one day behold her glory and partake of it. He who humbles himself shall be exalted.

II. *The power to protect her children on earth.*

1. The eternal Word gave Mary to mankind as protectrix and advocate, so that everyone can obtain through her what is conducive to his salvation.

2. Let us remember in all our needs that we have a kind and powerful mother in heaven.

III. *The power over the infernal spirits.*

1. The Holy Ghost, the Love of the Father and the Son, the Heavenly Fire, imparted to his spouse his own power over hell. All the wicked spirits tremble at the name of Mary.

2. Let us, therefore, in all our temptations, invoke the name of Mary together with the name of Jesus.

XXXI.

CONCLUSION.

To-day we offer up to Mary our monthly devotion,—but also our hearts, and beseech her to obtain for us

I. *The holy fear of God.*

1. It is the beginning of wisdom, one of the precious gifts of the Holy Ghost: it banishes sin, rejoices the heart, and gives life everlasting.

2. Forsake all fear of men, and fear only Him who can destroy body and soul in hell.

II. *Firm confidence in God.*

1. Mary has experienced more than any other creature God's infinite power and bounty. She is willing to implore for us this virtue.

2. Put yourself under her protection. If Mary protects you, you will not fall into despondency.

III. *An ardent love of God.*

1. Mary has loved God more than all the Cherubim and Seraphim; her love ever increased without being satiated. She is the mother of fair love.

2. Let us devote to her our hearts, that she may inflame them with the fire of divine love. O Mary, grant us that we may love thee and thy Son in time, and thus be able to love you in eternity.

Skeleton Sermons on the Sacrament of Matrimony.

BY BISHOP W. E. KETTELER.

SERMON I.

DIGNITY OF MATRIMONY.

You have presented yourselves in this sacred place in order to receive the holy sacrament of matrimony, and with it all the graces necessary to comply with the duties of your new state of life. The Holy Apostle calls matrimony a great sacrament in Christ and in the Church, (Eph. v, 32)—an assertion by which he intimates the dignity of the conjugal union, and its characteristic features.

1. Every blessing of Christianity springs from the union between the Son of God and mankind. This union was inaugurated when God took human nature and thus made it his own; when he became flesh for us, and dwelt among us; and it is continued in his intimate union with the Church, who is his mystical body. "Christ is the head of the body, the Church." Col. i, 18.

It is by this union that Christ confers all graces, that we receive the supernatural life of our soul, are spiritually born again, and receive a supernatural filiation and inheritance—eternal beatitude.

By the matrimonial union man receives natural his life; wherefore God ordained that matrimony should be a figure of the most intimate union existing between Christ and his Church. This is the grand idea suggested by St. Paul: The mystical union from which supernatural life springs forth, is in some high and mysterious manner symbolized in the matrimonial union from which issues natural life. Such is the will of God. It is his will that all *bonds of* matrimonial alliances should correspond with this pattern!

2. From this truth we draw the following inferences:

a. In his union with the Church God gives himself to

men, and men give themselves to God; that is what is called *religion.*—Matrimony should correspond with this idea; as is intimated by the words spoken in Paradise: "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." Gen. ii, 24.

b. In the relation between Christ and the Church we admire perfect unity. As the members and the head form one body, so do Christ and the Church.—The unity ought also to characterize Christian matrimony. Therefore "the husband the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church." Eph. v. 23. "They shall be two in one flesh." Gen. ii, 24.

c. Unity involves indissolubility—a characteristic feature of the union between Christ and his Church.—Matrimony, in consequence, cannot be dissolved. "Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Mt. xix, 6.

d. Another consequence of unity is the reconciliation of authority and obedience:—in Christ absolute authority; on the part of the Church absolute obedience; and yet authority exercised in charity, and obedience rendered in charity.—A sublime pattern of matrimony! Hence: "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife; as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the Saviour of his body. Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ; so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it * * So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." Eph. v, 22-28. Authority and obedience ought, consequently, to be purified by charity.

e. Another consequence of unity and charity is *forbearance.* Christ bears patiently all our imperfections, infirmities, and sins.—In a similar way, married people ought to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ; as the members of the same body bear the infirmities of one another.

f. The objects to be attained by the union of Christ and

his Church are the honor of God and the sanctification of men. The objects of matrimony are the same:—the honor of God, the sanctification of the married couple, of the family, and of others who see their good works.

Because matrimony in Christ and his Church is so pure and sublime an institution, and because the moral strength of those who engage in it is so insignificant, therefore Christ has elevated matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament, that is, has attached to it supernatural graces.

That matrimony is a sacrament, is the unanimous doctrine of the Catholic and Greek churches, as well as of the ancient heresies.

I hope and pray that your matrimony may correspond with the sublime symbol afforded in the union between Christ and his Church! May it be,

For the honor of God,
For your temporal welfare,
For the benefit of your family,
For your eternal salvation.

SERMON II.
THE GREAT SACRAMENT IN CHRIST AND IN HIS CHURCH.

"This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the Church." Eph. v, 32.

St. Paul received the special grace to expound the Christian doctrine with great sublimity. Whether his subject be Christ, or the dignity of the Christian, or Christian life, or the Church, or the Sacrament of Matrimony, he treats of it with equal sublimity. I will select four points of doctrine on the last of these subjects which he intimates Eph. v.

1. In the first place he calls matrimony a *great sacrament.* We easily recognize it as such

a. From the exuberant graces and blessings connected with it. On it depends principally the welfare of men, since it

is the foundation of the family. Good parents sow blessings; bad parents sow curses.

b. From the intimacy of the union. Hence the Apostle says: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother; and shall adhere to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh." Eph. v, 31. This union is so intimate, because it is the foundation of families.

c. From the fact that God himself established it soon after the creation of men. It is the foundation and pattern of all social unions. It alone received from God its constitution.

But all this is found only "in Christ and in the Church."

2. In the second place, he presents us with the *sublimest* image of matrimony, by comparing the union between husband and wife to the union between Christ and the Church; and deduces therefrom the duties of married persons. The reasons are obvious:

a. The first is because all unions among Christians ought to resemble the union existing between Christ and his Church. For the foundation of all such unions is authority and obedience. But all authority has its foundation in Christ; and all obedience has its motive and measure in obedience towards Christ.

b. The second is, because, as, by virtue of the union between Christ and his Church, the soul receives supernatural life, we are born again and obtain divine filiation; so by virtue of the union between husband and wife the several members of the human family receive natural life. Consequently the terrestrial union should resemble the celestial one.

Let therefore married people ever remember their grand ideal, and endeavor to confirm their union to it.

3. From this sublime model we learn also the duties of the Christian husband and wife. The principal duties of the husband the Apostle describes as three-fold.

a. "The husband is the head of the wife; as Christ is the head of the Church" (Eph. v, 23). Such is the divine hierarchy in the family. The husband, having his authority from Christ, is obliged to exercise that authority, according to His holy will.

b. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it." Eph. v, 25. This love ought to be deep, pure, supernatural, constant, patient, faithful.

c. The husband should sanctify his wife by his love. The Apostle says that Christ delivered himself for the Church, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it, etc. Then he draws the inference: "So also ought men to love their wives." Eph. v, 25-28.

4. Guided by the same model he describes the duties of the Christian wife.

a. "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord." Eph, v, 22. Consequently, the motive of obedience is the love of Christ, not principally natural love.

b. "As the Church is subject to Christ; so also let their wives be to their husbands in all things." Eph. v, 24. According to the example of the Church, wives ought to be obedient, with joy and perseverance, "in all things" that are honest.

In order to enable you to keep faithfully this covenant which you are to enter into, the grace of the sacrament will be conferred on you. May God bestow his abundant blessings upon you! May this union be to you a means of obtaining eternal salvation!

SERMON III.

THE DIVINE ALLIANCE.

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Mt. xix, 6. Before I join you together as husband and wife, let me say a few words concerning the nature and duties of your new state of life.

1. Matrimony is the *oldest union* among men, and was established by God himself, who gave to it its nature and regulations. "And God brought her to Adam." Matrimony is consequently stamped indelibly with a divine character.

2. Matrimony is the *most important union* among men. The end of man is to serve God and thereby to obtain eternal salva-

tion. It is obvious that the obtaining of this end by married persons principally depends on the nature of their matrimonial union. Married persons will, as a general rule, go together the way to heaven or to eternal reprobation.—Moreover, matrimony is the foundation of the family. The welfare of the family, frequently through many generations, depends on one matrimonial union. Those heroic souls, of both sexes, who are illustrious for their virtue, and were the benefactors of their contemporaries, were generally the offspring of truly Christian parents.

3. Matrimony is the *most intimate union* among men. Jesus says: "Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh." Mt. xix, 6. He quoted the words of our proto-parent, in order to intimate his intention to re-establish matrimony in its primeval perfection. This wonderful intimacy of matrimonial union is also insinuated by the manner in which Eve was created. God made Eve out of Adam's side, as the Church was made out of the side of Jesus.

This intimate union is only possible, when husband and wife are truly religious, when they are united in the one true religion. Holy religion unites hearts until death, preserves them under all circumstances from all inconstancy, and overcomes selfishness, which tends to rend unity. Consequently this intimate union cannot be established but in Christ and in his Church. The more united with Christ married persons are, the more they are united with each other.

4. Matrimony is the *strongest union* among men, since it is indissoluble. Jesus says: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." In these words our Saviour suggests two ideas:

It is true that two human beings become united by the bonds of matrimony of their own free choice. Nevertheless it is God who joins them together, because, with Christians, the will of God is the motive of their resolution, and because God himself has established the institution of matrimony. *Deus conjunxit.*

The inference is this: *Homo non separet.* What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder, neither by an exter-

nal nor by an internal separation; not even by an unfaithful thought.

5. Matrimony is the *holiest union* among men. This is manifest

a. From its model—the union between Christ and his Church.

b. From its sacramental dignity.

c. From the undeniable fact, that Christian matrimony is a seminary of all Christian virtues.

6. Matrimony is the union which imposes on men the *greatest and most important duties.* St. Thomas says that a divine commandment is the more obligatory, the greater the benefits resulting from its observance, and the greater the detriment resulting from its violation. When we apply this principle to the state of matrimony, we become convinced of the importance of its duties.—This is emphatically the case in our times, when such numerous and monstrous evils spring from the degradation of matrimony.

May God grant that this sacred union may be the means of leading you to your eternal happiness, and be a never-failing source of consolation to you during your earthly sojourn!

SERMON IV.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MATRIMONY.

God has raised matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament—a sign of its importance, and of the necessity of supernatural grace to those who live in the married state, that they may be able to comply with their many duties; as well as of the obligation imposed on them to preserve this grace. Permit me to dwell for a few moments on these important considerations.

1. God has raised matrimony to the *dignity of a sacrament.*

a. The seven-fold number of the holy sacraments is not arbitrary, but is an evidence of divine wisdom.

The natural life is sanctified by the supernatural. By Baptism, we receive supernatural life, and divine filiation. By Holy Communion, we receive the bread of the children of God, which gives us life everlasting. By Holy Confirmation, we receive, as soldiers of Christ, "the armour of God" (Eph. vi, 13), that we may be able to resist falsehood and sin. By the Sacrament of Penance, we receive the remedy against the diseases of our souls. By Extreme Unction, we receive the strength of dying well and with resignation. And as these five sacraments refer to individuals, so the two last sacraments—Matrimony and Holy Orders—refer to Christian society, whose most important institutions are the Church and, in her, the family. Therefore are those who are to rule the family, as well as those who are to rule the Church, sanctified by sacramental grace.

b. God himself framed a divine and, therefore, immutable constituton of the matrimonial state.

In this respect likewise we remark a similarity between the Church and matrimony. As of all human institutions God sanctified only the Church and matrimony by sacramental grace; so, of all human institutions, for the Church and for matrimony only did he frame a divine constitution.

God framed a divine constitution for the Church. This constitution manifests its divine origin by being admirably simple in its fundamental provisions, and yet so manifold and expansive as to be adapted for all ages and countries.

It is for this reason that, in these days, the attacks of the enemies of Christ are directed against the constitution of the Church, because it is the destruction of the Church which they contemplate.

God framed a divine constitution for matrimony also. This, too, betrays a divine origin by being admirably simple in its fundamental provisions, and yet so manifold as to be adapted for ll ages, and nations, so that we are not able to imagine anything nore perfect. This constitution consists in unity, indissolubility nd fidelity. This constitution it is which such strenuous efforts

are made in our days to destroy, because the destruction of matrimony is contemplated.

The destruction of these two constitutions—the constitution of the Church, and the constitution of matrimony—such is the aim of all modern persecution, of all struggles against God and his cause among men of these days.

2. Hence we learn the *great significance of matrimony.* Man can profane and desecrate the holiest things. It is the unfavorable side of the liberty with which we have been endowed, that we are able to abuse it, to the denial of the surest and sublimest truth, and the degradation of the best and holiest things. Sad indeed is the abuse of human liberty when matrimony is represented by the world and by human passion as something low and animal, whilst Christ and the Church present it in so exalted a dignity, that it is a sacrament, and has a divine constitution.

3. We learn also the necessity of grace, in order to comply with the duties of the married state.

Our Saviour said: "Without me, you can do nothing," John xv, 5; that is to say, without me you can neither obtain forgiveness of your sins, nor acquire the necessary virtues, nor fulfill the duties of a Christian.

But by elevating matrimony to the sacramental dignity, our Lord manifests the necessity of special graces for married people. They ought to have this truth deeply impressed on their minds. It is true, God does not work our salvation without our own cooperation; but it is also true that we cannot reach our last end without divine assistance. The more we exercise our own faculties, and, at the same time, in profound humility, implore help from above, the greater will be our strength in fulfilling our duties.

4. The conclusion is obvious:—that you ought to endeavor to preserve and augment this grace in you by daily prayer, by keeping holy the Lord's Day, by frequently receiving the holy Sacraments, by avoiding sin, by a faithful compliance with the duties of your new state of life, by mutual love, faithfulness, and patience.

SERMON V.
THE RIGHT INTENTION.

"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as it behoveth in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives; and be not bitter against them." Col. iii, 18, 19.

You are to enter the married state as children of the Church. As such, you ought to be *led by the right intention*, and ought to be *firmly resolved to fulfill faithfully the duties* which the Church of Christ makes known to you.

1. In all our actions it is not sufficient, that they are good in themselves: we must perform them also with a good intention. The value of our actions before God depends on this. The best acts have no value before God, when the good intention is lacking. It is the same with faith, even to martyrdom, and almsgiving. (Mt. v, 46-48; vi, 1, 2, 5). St Paul demands therefore: "All whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Col. iii, 17.

The same is to be said concerning the intention in entering the married state.

Christians should not enter this state principally by reason of a natural inclination. God has implanted this inclination in the human heart, in order to facilitate the duties imposed by it. Yet it ought not to be the principal motive.

Nor should the principal motive be, to find temporal happiness. God imparts it in some measure. Yet it is not the principal end of matrimony. Much less should Christians be united by the bonds of matrimony from a still lower intention, or from merely selfish ends.

They should rather enter the married state, as St. Paul says, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to do the will of God, to serve him, and to work their own salvation.

2. It follows that Christians should enter the married state with the firm resolution to fulfill all the duties of this state according to the demands of the Church.

These duties are especially the following:

They ought to live together in unity, charity, and conjugal fidelity, until death separates them.

They ought to edify each other by a pious life.

They ought to educate their children in the fear of the Lord.

The husband ought to nourish and protect his wife, who, in her turn, ought to obey him in all that is honest and becoming.

SERMON VI.

DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

The wedding day is one of the most important days of human life. It is the beginning of a very serious period of life. But religion teaches you that Divine Providence keeps watch over you, just in proportion as you enter your new state of life as faithful children of the Church. You have the more reason to put your confidence in God according to the conscientiousness with which you fulfill the various duties of the married state. The Roman Catechism enumerates these duties: mentioning first the particular duties of the husband, and in the second place those of the wife.

I. DUTIES OF THE HUSBAND.

1. The Christian husband should, in the first place, regard his wife as a helpmate given him by God, and therefore treat her with respect (liberaliter et honorifice). St. Paul says (Eph. v, 25): "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it." In Col. iii, 89, he says in an explanatory way: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter toward them." St. Peter exhorts husbands to give honor to the women as to the co-heirs of the grace of life. I Pet. iii, 7. And St. Paul gives the explanation: "Marriage honorable in all." Heb. xiii, 4.

2. The Christian husband should, further, devote himself to a serious occupation of life with perseverance that he may

not become enervated by idleness (inerti otio languescat),—the mother of almost all vices.—According to Christian doctrine, all men are obliged to work, so that the faculties of soul and body be developed.

3. He should, in the third place, take good charge of the family, should watch the behavior of all the members of his household, and insist on their fulfilling their respective duties.

These duties are incumbent on the husband, because God has made him head of the family. They cannot be transferred to others, nor dispensed with, because of other duties.

II. DUTIES OF THE WIFE.

1. The Christian wives should, according to the prince of the Apostles, "be subject to their husbands; that if any believe not the word, they may be gained without the word, by the conversation of the wives, considering their chaste conversation with fear." I Pet. iii, 1. Although these words apply chiefly to the times when many Christian women had Gentiles for their husbands, yet they are also applicable to women married to Christians. They ought to sanctify their husbands by obedience, by their conversation, by the fear of the Lord.

2. "Whose adorning let it not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit, which is rich in the sight of God. For after this manner heretofore also the holy women, hoping in God, adorned themselves." I Pet. iii, 3-5. St. Peter is far from asserting that all outward adorning is prohibited, but he says that the woman should not seek in it her worth, which alone lies in true virtue.

3. The Christian wife ought to be solicitous to educate her children in the exercise of religion, and to govern the household well. Therefore she ought to seek her delight within the circle of her own family.

4. She ought to love next to God her husband, and obey him with a joyful heart in all things that are not contrary to Christian propriety.

Such are the duties of husband and wife. Fulfill them, and the divine blessing will rest upon you. But in order to be enabled to fulfill them, you must invoke divine assistance by daily prayer.

SERMON VII.

THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN MATRIMONY.

"Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Mt. xviii, 20.

Matrimony "in Christ and in the Church" is, according to the Apostle, a great Sacrament. As it is of the utmost importance to have something approaching to an adequate idea of the union which you are about to contract, let me recall to your mind some few reflections regarding the dignity of this union.

1. Christian matrimony—matrimony in Christ and in the Church—is a union to which God himself gave his consent.

a. Tertullian endeavors to give a clear idea of the importance of this consent, by referring to the consent of our parents, his argument being as follows: If good children do not enter the state of matrimony without the consent of their parents, Christians are the less justified in being united by the bonds of matrimony without the consent of their Father in heaven.

b. This consent being obtained, the holy Angels rejoice, and the Church imparts her blessing.

c. This good spirit is far from those who are content to enter a union that is not expressly prohibited by God.

2. Christian matrimony is a union that unites the hearts of those who contract it.

This inner union is founded on one faith, one hope, one charity, and one obedience. Every other unity touches only the surface of the soul.

3. Christian matrimony, in Christ and in the Church, unites husband and wife also in their external life.

They pray together.

They work together.

They are patient with each other.

They have no secrets from one another.

They are together in church, and at the altar.

They are united in joy and grief.

4. In Christian matrimony the promise of Christ is fulfilled "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Such is matrimony, as it is instituted by God, in order that its double aim may be obtained, namely, the sanctification of the married couple, and the education of their children.

SERMON VIII.

THE BLESSING OF THE CHURCH.

The Holy Church blesses you in the words addressed once to Tobias and Sara: "The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you; and may he join you together, and fulfill his blessing in you." Tobias vii, 15. Jesus Christ bestows his blessing, by his Church, on your conjugal union—your new state of life—a necessary and an efficacious blessing.

You are in need of a special blessing.

1. There are momentous times in human life, when man needs a special protection from above. Such a time is the day of conjugal union.

a. By reason of the indissolubility of matrimony. However great may be the imperfections, and violent the passions, of husband or wife, they must bear them in patience, until death separates them.—Diseases, disappointments, and calamities are occasional visitors of every family, and put the strength of human virtue to the test.

b. By reason of the duties imposed on husband and wife by married life. "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v, 8.

2. This blessing should increase your confidence

a. Almighty God who instituted and sanctified matrimony in Paradise, blesses also your bonds of matrimony.

b. Our Saviour has sanctified matrimony by elevating it to the dignity of a *great sacrament*, as the Apostle says, in Christ and in his Church. Christian matrimony does not draw the heart from Christ, but attaches it the more to him. The husband should be to his wife what Christ is to his Church, and the wife should be to her husband what the Church is to Christ. Such marriages are made in heaven; their aim is God; their daily task, mutual sanctification; their reward, eternal happiness.

Receive then, young man, your bride from the Holy Church, your mother and her mother, and be to her what St. Joachim was to St. Anna, what St. Joseph was to the Blessed Virgin, what Christ is to his Church.

M. Binder.

SERMON IX.

CONJUGAL LOVE.

Love has united your hearts, and now you are to sanctify your alliance of love by receiving the sacrament of matrimony. You should, however, never forget that love must not only originate, but also preserve, your intimate union.

1. *It is a necessary virtue.*

a. It is necessary to all who wish to please God and be saved. Of course I do not speak of sensual love, a propensity of the flesh, but of the heavenly daughter who seeks God above all things, and man for the love of God.

b. It is necessary to married people in particular, because only love renders cohabitation bearable. If your love should be found wanting, your lives would be the beginning of hell on earth. Many whom other motives than sincere love induced to enter the married state, have cursed their wedding day. Therefore preserve your mutual love.

2. *Its preservation demands sacrifices.*

The Apostle comprises these sacrifices in the following words: "Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." I Cor xiii, 7.

a. Charity beareth all things. You will have to go through many hardships and struggles. Do not multiply them by reproaches and reprimands.

b. Charity believeth all things. You should ever be convinced of your mutual love. Mistrust and jealousy are deadly enemies of conjugal love.

c. Charity hopeth all things. If the one has well-founded reason to complain of the conduct of the other, he does not lose hopes for amendment.

d. Charity endureth all things. Let one bear the burden of the other. Beware of selfishness; it is the grave of love.

Pray every day for the spirit of divine love, and walk under the eyes of God.

J. Ritter.

SERMON X.
FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD.

If you sincerely desire to become happy in your new state of life, you must strive to be ever friends of God. For you need His special protection and grace in order to escape the many perils to which your souls will be subject.

1. *The married state has its particular dangers:*

a. To the virtue of chastity. There is a certain degree of chastity required of married persons, without which they cannot be admitted to the society of holy angels. God alone, by his grace, can impart this gift.

b. *To divine charity*, which ought to surpass every earthly love. How difficult is it, not to have your heart divided between God and your husband or wife, and to consent to a bad action in violation of divine justice!

c. *To conjugal love.* Two men seldom agree. Therefore divine grace is required that married people may keep their solemn pledge of mutual charity.

2. *There is often danger of seducing each other to sin.*

Those who live together have a natural tendency to imitate the morals of one another. It is a sad experience that, in many cases, the good is perverted by the wicked. The husband who is indifferent in religion often imparts this spirit of indifferentism to his heretofore religious wife; whilst a vicious woman exercises the most pernicious influence upon her husband. Eve seduced Adam. Bad women perverted Solomon.

3. *There is danger resulting from earthly cares.*

A Christian cannot obtain salvation unless he be poor in spirit. Yet married people would be guilty of a culpable negligence, if they did not care for their house and children. No doubt, it is difficult to unite these two objects. "For they who would become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil." I Tim. vi, 9. Yet, they have no right to give their property to the poor, so as to leave their families in indigence. But it is necessary, "that they also who have wives, be as those who have not; and they who buy, as if they were not possessing any thing." I Cor. vii, 29, 30. That this is possible, we see from the lives of the Saints, as of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, etc.

To escape all these, and many other dangers, you need the grace of God, to obtain which you should make the firm resolution to be regular and diligent in saying your daily prayers, in receiving the holy sacraments, in assisting at Mass, as at the other public functions of the Church, and in hearing the word of God. If you keep this resolution faithfully, our Lord will promote even your temporal happiness.

Fr. Hunolt.

SERMON XI.

DIVINE FRIENDSHIP THE SOURCE OF TEMPORAL HAPPINESS.

You wish and hope to become happy in your new state of life. I wish and hope the same for you from the bottom of my heart; and therefore permit me to recall to your mind how neces-

sary it is to expect your happiness from God, and from your attachment to him. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Ps. cxxvi, 1.

1. The causes of earthly misery are ungodliness and wickedness.

Many endeavor to establish their earthly welfare by injustice committed against their neighbor, or by other unlawful actions. They are truly foolish, since God is their enemy, who alone distributes earthly happiness.

Adam desired to be as God, but plunged himself and his posterity into an ocean of misery. Saul, instead of destroying David from the face of the earth, increased his fame and glory. The Jews, desirous to save the temple by the death of Jesus, drew the divine judgment upon themselves. "There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel, against the Lord." Prov. xxi, 30.

Experience teaches, that the wicked are unhappy, even in the midst of their riches.

2. The cause of happiness is godliness.

Holy Scripture establishes clearly this doctrine. "As long as they (the Isralites) sinned not in the sight of their God, it was well with them: for their God hateth iniquity." Judith v, 21. "Justice exalteth a nation; but sin maketh nations miserable." Prov. xiv, 34.

It cannot be denied that the wicked often possess the fat of the earth. But God rewards them on earth for their few good works, because he foreknows that he cannot reward them in heaven.

Therefore, on this solemn day, make the firm resolution to serve God above all things. Say with Mathathias: "I and my sons, and my brethren will obey the law of our fathers." I Mach. ii, 20. Or with Josue: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Scherer.

SERMON XII.

FOUNDATION OF MATRIMONIAL HAPPINESS.

Married people who loved each other and were solicitous to fulfill all the duties of their state of life, have ever found the smoothest road to heaven. The reason of there being so many unhappy marriages is because matrimonial happiness is not sought where only it can be truly found. The principal pillars of matrimonial happiness are:

1. *Fear of God.*

a. Simile of the house built upon the rock or upon the sand.

b. *Application.* He who has built the house of his matrimonial happiness upon beauty, youth, money, or rank, has indeed built upon sand. A disease, or an accident, may destroy it. "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain: the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Prov. xxxi, 30. Married people should love each other in God, and marry "in the Lord" (I Cor. vii, 39), so that matrimony will be to them a great sacrament in Christ and in his Church. Eph. v, 31.

2. *Mutual respect.*

a. We love an object in proportion to its real or supposed worth; but it is unbearable to be indissolubly united with a person whom we do not respect.

b. It is evidently of the utmost importance to have lived in innocence in the time of youth, and in the married state to live a virtuous life, and to avoid all offences. Jealousy, also, that common enemy of matrimonial happiness is incompatible with due respect, since it presupposes distrust in the virtue of the other.

3. *Mutual forbearance.* This is imperatively demanded because of human frailty.

You are not angels, but are subject to many imperfections. If every fault exasperates you, despondency must be the unavoidable consequence.

4. Conscientious performance of the daily duties of life.

Although wealth alone cannot render you happy; poverty, caused by one's own negligence, is often the cause of much misery.

The means to obtain this are principally industry and frugality—but especially divine blessing, which will surely be bestowed upon the virtuous. This blessing is mostly dependent upon the observance of the third, fourth, and seventh, Commandments.

Scherer.

SERMON XIII.

OBSTACLES TO DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

You are come to church this morning, dearly beloved brethren, to honor this young man and this young woman on their nuptial day. Thereby a good opportunity is offered to speak to you, who either live in the married state, or hope, at some time or other, to enter into this state, on some of the obstacles to domestic happiness.

1. One of these is covetousness, of which many families are guilty. The Apostle enumerates this vice among the most heinous vices of the Gentiles. Col. iii, 5. Domestic happiness is incompatible with this vice.

a. It is the cause of continual solicitude and anxiety. "What doth it profit him that he hath labored for the wind? All the days of his life he eateth in darkness, and in many cares, and in misery, and sorrow." Eccle. v, 15.

b. It causes discord, distrust, and moroseness; as even necessary expenses are able to create dissension.

c. It destroys all noble sentiments of devotion, hope, mercy, etc., obstructs the sources of true joy, and renders the avaricious man himself, as well as the members of his family, miserable.

d. It deprives a man of the divine blessing; for God departs from him who gives his preference to an idol.

2. Unfaithfulness is another obstacle. What a shame that this grievous vice should occur among Christians! What wonder that it should put an end to all domestic happiness!

a. The heart of the innocent party is necessarily embittered, and love is turned into aversion and disgust.

b. Prosperity is diminished; since unanimous co-operation is made impossible.

c. Shame and dishonor fill the measure of misery. "He that is an adulterer, for the folly of his heart shall destroy his own soul. He gathereth to himself shame and dishonor; and his reproach shall not be blotted out." Prov. vi, 32.

3. Luxury and dissipation, caused by a foolish desire to shine and glitter before the world, constitute a third obstacle. Its consequences are:

a. Uneasiness of mind, as he whose heart is attached to such foolish things must soon confess that all is vanity.

b. *Reproaches* of domestics and creditors.

c. Impoverishment, which is inevitable, when married people do not provide for the future.

4. Quarrelsomeness and jealousy.

a. In many families peace is unknown; which can only be obtained by mutual forbearance. They who are intolerant of one another's infirmities cannot, consequently, enjoy the fruit of peace. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." As children of God they shall be entitled to the divine blessing. Therefore our Saviour, when he bade his Apostles carry his blessing into the houses they visited, said that peace should rest only where there was a *son of peace.* Lk. x, 5, 6.

b. Where there is no peace, there is no happiness. "It is better to dwell in a wilderness, than with a quarrelsome and passionate woman." Prov. xxi, 19. "Better is a dry morsel with joy, than a house full of victims with strife."

May you never experience in your own life any of these obstacles in the way of domestic happiness! God will protect you, if you co-operate with sacramental grace.

Bishop Galura.

SERMON XIV.

CONSOLATIONS IN MARRIED LIFE.

I hope that your new state of life will prove to you a blessing. For, whilst to those who enter this state without the right intention, and in sin, it is a burden, principally by its indissolubility, and of the education of the children, these very same reasons are the sources of the greatest consolation to a virtuous husband and wife.

1. *The indissolubility.*

This is one of the greatest blessings of matrimony.

a. Where the sanctity of matrimony is not known, as among Protestants, the bond is considered as soluble. The solubility once admitted, no limits of divorce can be assigned. Are we not daily witnesses of the misery of repudiated wives, of abandoned husbands, and of children, blushing at the very mention of their father's, or of their mother's, name?

b. When the sanctity of matrimony is not reverenced, as is the case with vicious Catholics, the yoke becomes unbearable. The matrimonial state was entered into without thought of God, who therefore justly refused his grace; God is not remembered within the family; hence, no blessing. Thus, the efficacy of the sacrament is obstructed through the fault of the receivers.

c. But where the efficacy of the sacrament is not frustrated, as in the case of good Catholics, its indissolubility affords the greatest consolation. Knowing that God has joined them together until death shall put them asunder, they consider themselves as one body and one spirit, so that they may say with Ruth (i, 16): "Whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go; and where thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell." They experience the truth of the words of God: "It is not good for man to be alone." To them the married state is a state of mutual co-operation against the weakness of the flesh, for mutual edification and salvation, for relief in earthly tribulations, for the education of their chil-

dren. How numerous are the Saints who found their earthly happiness and their eternal salvation in the married state!

2. *The offspring.*

Matrimony is the only legitimate institution, established by God himself, for giving pious sons and daughters to the kingdom of God on earth, and Saints to the kingdom of God in heaven. Whenever parents strive to educate their children for God, matrimony is to them the source

a. Of great joy. Even, from a natural point of view, how legitimate a pride is it for parents to leave behind them worthy heirs of their name, and worthy members of the Holy Church, and heirs of heaven,—flowers grown in their own garden.

b. Of great consolation also, since pious children take care of their parents in their old age, and assist them in the agony of death. How great a consolation must it be to see their grown children respected as heads of new virtuous families, or reverenced as priests, or as members of religious orders! Disconsolate is the state of those parents who did not train their children in the fear of the Lord.

May then the fulness of divine blessing descend upon you! May this day be to you the cause of temporal and eternal happiness!

L. Fraydt.

Jubilee Sermons.

I.

ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF MARRIAGE.

"The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Mt. x, 30. We celebrate to-day a high family-festival, and numerous children are gathered in this sacred place to remember with thanksgiving the many blessings which they owe this matrimonial union entered into by their dear parents twenty-five years ago.

As you desire me to address to you a few words, I will give a short answer to two questions: (1.) To whom are we indebted for this blessed family-festival? (2.) What are the duties of which it reminds us?

1. To whom are we indebted for this festival day?

a. To Divine Providence. God takes care of all things, orders all things, and directs all things to the end for which he has created the world. This supreme care of God in preserving and governing the world is *Divine Providence*. Jesus says: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Mt. x, 29-30. Thus spoke our Lord to his Apostles in order to impart to them the greatest confidence in Divine Providence, to whom you also, dear parents and dear children, owe this festivity.

Although God takes care of all men, yet the fate of men differs. The distribution of his graces is the mystery of his wisdom; the one receiving more, the other less. Therefore we should thank God, when we receive much.

b. You are indebted to the Holy Church.

God takes care of all things, he governs and directs all things, but not always immediately. He takes care of us through his Church, whom he has commissioned to teach the truth, to administer the holy sacraments, and to regulate our morals. In

particular he takes care of the family by the sacrament of matrimony. The Christian family with all its blessings rests on the Church.

c. You are indebted to the charity of Jesus, to his Sacred Heart.

Jesus did not transfer to the Church the care of us in such a manner that he would not care of us himself. The Church is Christ himself, the body of Christ. "You are the body of Christ and members of member." I Cor. xii, 27. Therefore he is present in the most blessed Sacrament. Here he dwells in our midst, and takes care of us.

d. Ye children, you are indebted to your parents. God takes care of us through our parents.

2. *What are the duties of which this solemnity reminds us?*

a. The duty of giving heart-felt thanks to God.

b. The duty of the sincerest love for the Church.

c. The duty of the most ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the most blessed Sacrament. Jesus says: "If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make an abode with him." John xiv, 23.

d. Finally, the parents should renew their resolution to fulfill their duties toward their children; and the children should resolve to be faithful in fulfilling their duties toward their parents.

Bishop Ketteler.

II.

ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF MARRIAGE.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Lk. i, 46.

This solemnity is as touching as it is rare. Fifty years of a happy family life have this day passed for you. You have thought it your duty to give vent to your sentiments of gratitude to God, by rendering a solemn, public, homage of worship to Him in your

parish church. Let me explain in a few words the end for which this service is celebrated, that we all may attend it in a manner pleasing to God.

1. In the first place, let us thank God, in profound humility, for all the blessings that you and your children have received in consequence of this matrimonial union.

When the Blessed Virgin Mary received the greatest grace ever bestowed upon a creature, she, first of all, gave thanks and glory to God, and exercised herself in humility. She gave vent to this sentiment in the *Magnificat*, saying: "My soul doth magnify the Lord * * * Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid * * * For he that is mighty hath done great things to me." Thus she referred all things to God and his power, because she was overwhelmed with the consciousness of her own humbleness.

You who were so anxious to entertain in your own hearts, and in the hearts of your children, a tender love and devotion for the Mother of God, what better can you do on this day, when you recollect the many graces received during these fifty years, than foster in your hearts the same sentiments with which her heart was filled, when she had received in her womb the author of all graces? Therefore give glory to God of all things. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" I Cor. iv, 7.

2. In the second place, you are here assisting at this public homage of worship to Almighty God, in order to rejoice in the Lord who has bestowed upon you so many graces.

Herein you imitate also the Mother of God. Her soul was full of joy, so that after having given glory to God, she continued saying: "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." How great must have been the jubilation of her soul! Almost as great as the grace that she had received. It was no doubt the greatest joy, the holiest ecstasy that a human heart ever experienced.

Let this day be for you a day of great joy also, remember-

ing the many blessings bestowed upon you during these fifty years. "Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice." Philip. iv, 4.

These are true joys, because they are joys in Christ, and therefore are imperishable, whilst the joys and pleasures of the world all grow old as a garment.

3. You came here in the third place to thank God for all benefits and blessings received during one half of a century.

You have received "good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." Lk. vi, 38. (Some of the particular benefits may be mentioned).

And how manifold are the blessings which you, dear children and childrens' children, have received by means of this sacred union! You owe to it not only your temporal life, but also the spiritual goods, without which this temporal life would not have been a blessing. The Holy Church says of St. Monica that she was twice the mother of St. Augustine, because she bore him for the world, and for heaven. You may speak in a similar way of your parents in relation to you.

4. Finally, you are here for the purpose of renewing your nuptial vows and to receive the blessing of the Church.

When you made your nuptial vows fifty years ago, you received a great sacrament, your covenant being similar to that which exists between Christ and his Church. The faithful observance of the nuptial vow has been to you the cause of innumerable graces. Therefore, it has a blessed significance to renew it solemnly before the Church.

At the same time, ye children, you should renew the promise of reverence, charity, and obedience toward your parents.

Thereupon the Church invokes upon you the blessing of Almighty God; and Jesus bestows upon you the fulness of his blessing by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Holy Angel of God, carry this Holy Sacrifice and our prayers before the throne of God, and lay them upon the golden altar seen by St. John, that the fulness of divine blessing may descend

upon these venerable parents for the protection of their welfare in time and in eternity, and for the preservation of the holy Catholic faith in their family unto the remotest generations.

Bishop Ketteler.

III.

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

GRATULATION.

After having lived together in holy wedlock for fifty (twenty-five) years, you ask again, following a pious custom, the blessing of the Church, that you may accomplish with God what you once commenced with him. May this day of your jubilee be to you

1. *A day of pure joy.*

When fifty years ago you joined hands before God and his Church, your mind may have been troubled about the future. But to-day you rejoice

a. On account of your faithfulness to each other, of your tender love, and of the solicitude to promote the welfare of each other.

b. On account of the patience with which you have put up with the many tribulations in your family. You rejoice like the laborer after the performance of his daily task, and like the soldier after the battle has been fought.

2. *A day of thanksgiving.*

a. Honor is above all due to God who has given you so many years, and conferred grace upon you to assist you in keeping his commandments, and in performing good works, and who has protected you in all hardships and sufferings.

b. It behoves you to express your joy by ardent thanks. "What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?" Ps. cxv, 12. But as we are not able to reward the Lord, let us at least adore, and love him and hope for grace and mercy.

3. *A day of holy resolutions.*

a. Promise to our Lord to commit yourselves to him and his Providence.

If it should be his holy will that you should yet stay a number of years in our midst, as your children and we all hope, say to him: "O Lord, thy will be done. We are willing to labor and suffer."

If God should choose to shorten the days of your pilgrimage, say again to him: "O Lord, thy will be done! We are willing to live or to die, as thou pleasest. For us to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philip. i, 21.

b. Be resolved to bear the hardships of old age with patience.

As your corporeal eyes are getting dim, accept this visitation with Tobias, and have your spiritual eyes directed to the state of your soul.

As your ears are getting weak, listen with your spiritual ears to the words spoken by God in your hearts.

As your feet totter and your body trembles, you must endeavor to detach your heart from the earth, for which you can work no longer, and to prepare yourselves for eternity. Oh! that you may be able to say at the close of your earthly lives, with the Apostle: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me at that day." II Tim. iv, 7.

c. Since much experience is the crown of old men, and the fear of God is their glory (Ecclus. xxv, 8), you should teach, and give advice to, the young. Say to your children, and to your childrens' children: "I have been young, and now am old: and I have not seen the just forsaken." Ps. xxxvi, 25.

I and your children and friends will unite our prayers with yours, that the Lord may bestow upon you the best of his gifts.

Bishop Feigerle.

The Celebration of a First Mass.

MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC PRIEST.

Aaron the first high-priest of the Old Covenant, immolated his first holocaust before the whole people, eight days after his ordination, and blessed the people who for thanksgiving praised God and lay prostrate on the ground. The Catholic people have the more reason to manifest joy when a priest offers up the first time the sacrifice of the Mass, the more a first Mass surpasses the first sacrifice of the Old Covenant. The priest of the New Covenant appears in his divine functions as a second Christ, as it is intimated by the words of the Lord: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." John xx, 21. For the sake of the people the Catholic priest is sent, and therefore he is worthy of the respect and esteem of the people. Let us now reflect, by whom, to whom, and for what purpose he is sent.

I. BY WHOM AND TO WHOM THE PRIEST IS SENT.

As Christ was sent upon earth by the Father, in order to save all men, so also the priest is sent by God to men.

1. *The mission of the priest is divine.*

a. He is sent by the Son of God, who addressed his Apostles and their successors in these words: "You have not chosen me; but I have chosen you, appointed you, that you should go, and bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain." John xv, 16. And the Apostle says: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was." Heb. 4.

b. His mission is equal to that of the Son given Him by the Father. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." And the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles in a visible form, as he had descended upon Jesus in a visible form. The Christian priesthood is, consequently, of divine origin.

2. *The priest is sent to men.*

a. He is chosen among men, that he might be merciful and zealous. A man subject to frailties, and contaminated with

sins, holds the place of Christ. Therefore we should ever reverence the dignity and power conferred by God upon the priest, however unworthy may be his personal conduct.

b. He is sent to *all* men, as the Son of God was sent to all. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." Mt. xxviii, 19. All men are, consequently, shown to the priests, in order to find the salvation of their own souls; they are obliged to accept the word of God out of their mouth.

II. FOR WHAT PURPOSE THE PRIEST IS SENT.

When Jesus was yet on earth, he sent his disciples before him to those places which he was to visit himself. Now that he is in heaven, he sends his priests also to men whom he is to visit with his grace; but he sends them as his vicars, with the same power and commission as he possessed himself.

1. As vicars of Christ, the priests are obliged to do the same unto men, as Christ did unto them.

a. They must teach the truth, which he himself has revealed. "He that heareth you, heareth me." Lk. v, 16. "Though we, or an Angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." Gal. i, 8.

b. They must administer the means of grace instituted by Christ. "Let a man so look upon us as the minister of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." I Cor. iv, 1. The duty of hearing confession is particularly fruitful; and the power to forgive sins is an exclusive privilege of the Catholic priest.

c. They must sacrifice. They renew every day the bloody Sacrifice of Jesus Christ in an unbloody manner, and this not only in the name of the people or of the Church, but in the name and person of Jesus Christ himself. At the altar the priest performs stupendous miracles, and the Son of God himself obeys him.

d. They must pray and bless. Christ prayed incessantly, and dispensed his blessing everywhere.—The priests pray almost

without interruption, because they have allotted hours of prayer throughout the day. They are anointed with power from on high. They bless men, and all that is in relation to men. This blessing is the blessing of the Saviour, the blessing of the living God.

2. The priests have also to suffer as did their divine Lord and Master. Jesus foretold his Apostles that many tribulations would come upon them. "Behold, I send you as lambs among wolves." Lk. x, 3. "You shall be hated by all men." Mt. x, 22. To suffer is a part of the mission of the priest.

a. He has to endure many hardships and tribulations in fulfilling the duties of his vocation; even the fear of punishment and the risk of contagious diseases, do not justify him in abstaining from the fulfillment of his sacerdotal duties.

b. Persecutions and calumnies are frequently the portion of the zealous priest, as they were the portion of the Apostles. There may be priests, who forgetful of their dignity, are guilty of deplorable sins; but their judgment is reserved to God, and to the prelates of the Church.

Let us accompany this newly ordained priest, who ascends the altar for the first time, with our prayers, that the Lord may strengthen him in his exalted and arduous vocation.

G. Patiss.

Sketches of Addresses on the Day of First Communion.

I.

THE GREAT HONOR.

"What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?" you may indeed say, in the words of the Psalmist, on this day, which is not only the day of purest joys, but also of the *greatest honor*. The "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I Tim. vi, 15) himself honors you.

1. You are to *behold* the Lord and King of heaven, not with your bodily eyes—you could not bear the sight, any more than the three disciples could bear the sight of Jesus in his transfiguration—but with the eyes of faith, by virtue of which the presence of the Lord in the society of holy angels is as sure to us, as though we saw him with the eyes of the flesh, like those holy men who, as St. Chrysostom says, were deemed worthy to behold a host of angels in white garments, surrounding, in an adoring attitude, the altar during Holy Mass.—You know with how great desire to see the Lord Zacheus had ascended the tree, and how he was praised for this by Jesus. You know that Simeon and Anna would fain leave the world, because their eyes had seen its Saviour. Say joyfully with Job: "I shall see my God," and in the light of his presence I shall see myself the better in my own nothingness.

2. You are to hear his sweet voice, when he will speak to you in your hearts words of life everlasting, words of consolation. The queen of Saba came once a great distance only to hear words of wisdom out of the mouth of Solomon. What is Solomon in comparison with Jesus? The multitudes followed Jesus three days and nights into the desert, only to hear his heavenly doctrine. Oh! appreciate the grace bestowed on you, and say with the good little Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." I Kings iii, 10.

3. Your Jesus is to pay you a visit. If Elizabeth, at the visitation of the Mother of God, said in amazement and humility:

"Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" what should you say when the Lord himself comes to you? Will you not say with the Centurion: "O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof;" or, with St. Peter, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Lk. v, 8. O no, my Jesus, do not depart from me, stay with me, and leave with me the blessings of Thy visitation, as once in the house of Simon the Pharisee, of Zacheus, of Martha and Magdalene, and with the disciples at Emmaus.

4. You are to partake of his Supper. When Miphiboseth, the son of Jonathan, heard David say: "Thou shalt eat bread at my table always," he bowed down to him and said, "Who am I, that thou shouldst look upon me?"—so much was he overwhelmed with reverence and gratitude. (II Kings ix). What is David in comparison with Jesus Christ, or his table in comparison with our Communion-table?—We call those happy who at the wedding in Cana sat at the table with Jesus; and yet what is this in comparison with the honor of receiving Jesus himself in the Holy Eucharist?—You are with the Apostles in the Coenaculum. You receive with them Him who said: "Take ye and eat; this is my body, which is given for you."

5. You will be received among the number of his most intimate friends for ever. This friendship, commenced at the holy sacrament of baptism, is to-day solemnly sealed with the Flesh and Blood of the Son of God. That which the sons of Zebedee asked, through their mother, namely, to sit the one on the right hand, the other on the left of Jesus, is eminently fulfilled in you, as you receive the pledge of eternal happiness.

P. A. Scherer.

II.

APPROACH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT WITH A VIVID FAITH.

Happy are you on this most gracious day, when you approach your God and Lord in his Blessed Sacrament, to partake of his

love-feast. A greater honor is prepared for you, than was conferred upon the Shepherds and the Wise Men. For you are deemed worthy, not only to embrace the Divine Infant, but also to receive Him into your hearts. Take then the Shepherds at the Manger, and the Wise Men, for your models, especially in their vivid faith.

I. *The faith of the Shepherds, and of the Wise Men.*

1. It was put to a severe test. The Shepherds hear the voice of the Angel, and the Wise Men see the star in the East, and forthwith they hasten to adore the Saviour,—the same Jesus whom you are to receive.

This Jesus was announced to the Shepherds as "the Saviour," "Christ the Lord," and as son of David the great king.

The Wise Men hasten to adore the Expected of nations, Him that is born King of the Jews.

But what do they find? A helpless child; most fair to look upon, yet in all things (sin excepted) like other children. His throne, a manger; his palace, a stable.

2. Still their faith remained unshaken. Behold the Shepherds and the princes prostrate before this Child, offering their significant gifts. What is the cause of this firm faith? The inner divine inspiration, the grace of the Holy Ghost, that met no obstacle in their humble and pure hearts.

I'. *Your faith should be similar to theirs.*

1. Jesus has rendered the belief in this Blessed Sacrament so easy. The grace of faith has been infused into your hearts by the sacrament of baptism; you need only to open your hearts to the rays of this supernatural light.—You see no longer the Divine Child in a stable, but you know that he dwells in thousands of magnificent churches.

2. This our faith is founded on the fact of divine omnipotence, and on the infallible teaching of the Church. God the Almighty is powerful enough to perform greater things than we are able to comprehend. St. Louis, King of France, would not go to see the Child Jesus when he was miraculously visible in the sacred host, because, he said, he believed in the sacramental

presence of Jesus more firmly than if he should behold Him with his own eyes.—You have the testimony of the infallible Church, of the most learned men of all centuries, and of the innumerable multitude of Saints.

Follow then these Saints, and like them approach the Holy Table with a vivid faith.

P. A. Scherer.

III.

"HAVE A GOOD HEART; IT IS I." Mk. vi, 50.

Jesus, who said: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you," has invited you also on this solemn day to partake of his Supper. Although, at your age, you scarcely know what it means, "to labor and be heavy laden," yet you have many reasons to ask your Jesus, at your first Holy Communion, for many favors.

1. *Pray for your own selves.*

a. As regards your spiritual affairs, ask for the preservation of your innocence, for victory over your temptations, and for perseverance. That Jesus comes to you who loves innocent children so tenderly, embracing them and placing them, as models, in the midst of his disciples; the same Jesus, who slumbered during the tempest, and then stilled the winds and waves; the same Jesus who prayed most fervently for his disciples and for all of us: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me." John xvii, 11.

b. As regards temporal affairs, ask for health and happiness, the talents and means of acquiring the knowledge necessary for your state of life—why should you not expect them from your Jesus, from whom such power proceeded, that a poor woman who touched his garment, was cleansed without delay; who showed, at Cana in Galilee, how much he has also at heart our temporal welfare; who himself increased, as in age, so in wisdom and in grace before God and men; who rewarded twice, in the desert, the thirst of the multitudes for knowledge by stupendous miracles.

2. *Pray for others also.*

Jesus takes a great delight in hearing you pray for your fellow-men. Pray then

a. For those nearest to you, for your parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, benefactors, etc. You should strengthen your filial confidence by calling to your mind, that Jesus granted the petitions of Jairus, and of the woman of Chanaan, for their daughters; of the centurion, for his servant; of Mary and Magdalene, for their brother Lazarus; of St. Peter, for his mother-in-law; that, even without being asked, moved with commiseration, he raised the young man at Naim to life again, and that, on the Cross, he recommended his mother to his disciple.—Oh! give Him cause to say to you: "Great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt." Mt. xv, 28.

b. For all men; for those who may have offended you; for the poor, sick and suffering; for sinners and infidels; for the souls in Purgatory; knowing that Jesus went about doing good, that he healed the sick, pardoned poor sinners their offences, and the thief at his last hour, and that he taught us to pray, "*Our* Father."

P. A. Scherer.

IV.

LOVE AND RETURN OF LOVE.

The moment is near at hand when the words of Holy Scripture will be verified in you: "My delights are to be with the children of men." Prov. viii, 31. Jesus delights to be with all men, but with a particular predilection with children. Jesus requires of you that you should return his love. Let us then consider

I. *How tenderly Jesus loves little children.*

The Son of God showed his love toward children by coming into the world in the form of a child, not in that of a grown man. This idea it is which suggested those pictures, wherein the Child Jesus is represented playing with little John the Baptist, and with

other children, and with lambs. Let me impress upon you this love of Jesus for children by an incident in His life recorded Mt. xix, 13 and Lk. xviii, 15.

1. "Then were little children presented to him." Think you that the mothers would have dared to do this, unless they had previously observed His special love for children, and that it was inopportune to bring them to him.

2. The mothers came to implore Jesus that he would lay his hands upon them, and pray. Your mothers and your teachers have conducted you hither in order that Jesus may descend into your hearts in a miraculous way with the fulness of his benediction.

3. Consider, further, the circumstances. He was on his journey toward Jerusalem, to be present there at the approaching Pasch. It was probably early in the evening. The malicious Pharisees had been persecuting him by asking him several designing questions. Great multitudes followed him; he taught them important doctrines, and had been much interrupted in his teaching. When, therefore, the disciples saw the mothers approach with their children, they rebuked them.

4. But Jesus takes the little ones under his protection, saying: "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not." Alas! that there should be those who, not from compassion with the fatigued Jesus, but through malignity, by seduction, keep little children from him! Jesus assigns also the reason, saying: "For the kingdom of heaven is for such."—He presents them as models for adults. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a child shall not enter into it."—"And embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, He blessed them." Mk. x, 16. Would you not like to have been one of those little children? How ardently your heart would have been inflamed with love for Jesus! Yet reflect that the same Jesus is present here, anxious to give you more than he gave to them.

II. *Who are those happy children whom Jesus loves?*

Jesus gave an answer to this question on another occasion. "The disciples came to Jesus, saying: Who, thinkest thou, is the

greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus seized this opportunity to teach us under what conditions we may enter heaven.

1. "Jesus calls unto him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. xviii, 1. And then he said: "He that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me." Thereupon he warned all men never to scandalize one of those little ones. Here you see how tenderly Jesus loves you. You must return his love in deeds. But how? Jesus tells you how.

2. He tells you of what dispositions you must be, in order to be worthy of his love.

a. You must beware of the spirit of the world. The disciples of Jesus desired to obtain the first rank in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. If you are proud, wayward, sullen, quarrelsome children, Jesus will not love you. "The goodness and kindness of our Saviour God appeared, instructing us, that renouncing impurity, and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in this world." Titus iii, 4; ii, 12.

b. Jesus loves those children who are possessed of humility, and all other virtues of a child's heart; such as innocence, docility, obedience, peaceableness, etc. Renew then once more your good resolutions; and offer your hearts to Jesus, that his word may be fulfilled in you: "If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make an abode with him." John xiv, 23.

P. A. Scherer.

V.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE LIVING TEMPLES OF GOD.

When a congregation is engaged in building a new church, much labor is to be done before it be completed. But so soon as the work is completed, a great day is celebrated,—the day of church dedication. The new house of God is richly decorated;

and the bishop himself, surrounded by many priests, appears. For a great undertaking has been accomplished; a house is prepared, not for men, but for God. The Divine Saviour himself makes his entry in the Blessed Sacrament, to dwell in the midst of his children day and night, and to hear their prayers.

We celebrate to-day a similar solemnity, the dedication of so many temples of God as there are First-Communicants. Your parents and teachers have endeavored to prepare your hearts that they might be worthy temples of Jesus,—a work of several years. Yesterday you have removed by a worthy confession from your hearts all which might displease the eyes of the Son of God. And now the day of dedication is come, when far greater things will be accomplished in you, than in a new church at its dedication.

1. When a new church is dedicated for the service of God, the bishop prays to God that Satan may be kept far from this sacred place; it is solemnly declared to be God's property; the Holy Sacrifice of Mass is celebrated, and our Saviour dwells thenceforth in the tabernacle.

You have also solemnly renounced Satan and all his works and pomp. You have sworn allegiance to Jesus and his holy Catholic Church. Now the happy hour is come when your dearest Saviour will dwell for the first time in the tabernacle of your heart.

How happy you are on this day! He who is the delight of the Angels and Saints in heaven, the Lord of the universe, who out of love for you lay in the Manger and died on the Cross, desires to be the food of your souls, and to take up his abode with you. You will remain happy if you only preserve your hearts in their present purity, and allow your Saviour to dwell in them for ever. God promises you what he once promised at the consecration of the temple at Jerusalem: "I have chosen, and have sanctified this place (your hearts), that my name may be there for ever, and my eyes and my heart may remain there perpetually" (II Par. vii, 16), that is, I will watch over you and bless you in faithful love for ever.

Being living temples of Jesus Christ, you must adorn your hearts with the living flowers of virtue. I hope that you have faithfully exerted yourselves to have your souls adorned with all Christian virtues. A short time has yet to pass before Jesus will come to you. Employ it well in making acts of faith, humility, and contrition; of hope, and of the tenderest love of Jesus; and of ardent desire.

2. If the consecration of a church is an imposing and grand ceremony, its desecration is a deed of horror. When a great crime is committed within a church, such as murder, or an external sin of impurity, the church is desecrated, the Blessed Sacrament is removed, the Holy Sacrifice is offered no more within it; the candles are extinguished, and the altars deprived of their adornment. It is a sad, heart-stirring sight.

The desecration of a church is a figure of the still greater calamity that would befall you if you should defile the temple of God, which you are, by a mortal sin, especially by a sin of impurity. Shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, the heavy gate of the temple opened by itself, and voices were heard in the air, saying: "Let us go hence." God had left the temple, and the magnificent edifice became a prey to the flames of fire. When a child commits a grievous sin, the holy angels say: "Let us go hence." Our dear Saviour leaves the contaminated soul; the Holy Spirit gives room to the wicked spirit. The angelic virtues of innocence, charity, confidence, obedience, humility, etc., quit the soul, and the hideous brood of sins and bad desires creep in. The sanctuary lamp of zealous prayer is extinguished, the peace of God disappears, and the remorse of an evil conscience torments the unhappy child. And if no penance be done, the once magnificent, but now desecrated, temple of God will become a prey to hell.

Pray to Jesus that he may protect you from the misery of a mortal sin. Renew your good resolutions, and pray every day for the grace of perseverance.

Pray ye also, parents of these blessed children, that they may never lose the grace of God. Renew your resolutions to guard the living temples of God from profanation.

All ye who are witnesses of the happiness of these children treat them with reverence. "If any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy." I Cor. iii, 17.

You had once your day also, when you were consecrated temples of Jesus Christ. Have you been faithful to your vows? If you should have violated the temple of God, your heart, be sorrowful and repent, but despair not. Purify the desecrated temple by sincere penance.

O Jesus, pour out the fulness of thy grace upon these children. May thy holy angels of peace, of chastity, of charity, and of truth, dwell with them and preserve them from all evil, and lead them into the temple of eternal glory and blessedness!

J. Schmitt.

VI.

THE GOSPEL ON LOW SUNDAY AND THE FIRST COMMUNION.

The great grace that is conferred on you to-day, is prefigured by the Gospel.

1. *The apparition of Christ a figure of Holy Communion.*

a. Christ appears to his Apostles (Verse 19). He appears also to these children, comes to them, converses and abides with them.

b. Jesus showed them his hands and his side (V. 29). He shows to these children his infinite charity by which these wounds were inflicted; and imparts to them the merits which he has gained through them.

c. Jesus bestows upon his disciples the power of forgiving sins (V. 23). He grants these children forgiveness of those sins that may perhaps yet contaminate their souls.

d. Jesus imparts to his disciples the Holy Ghost (V. 22). He imparts to the Communicants the abundant graces of the Holy Ghost.

e. Jesus bestows peace upon his disciples (V. 18). He brings rest and holy peace to these children also.

f. Jesus filled the hearts of the disciples with joy (V. 20). The hearts of these children are also full of sweet holy joy.

2. *The conduct of the disciples,—a figure of our preparation.*

a. The doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together (V. 19). The door of our heart ought to be shut against sin, evil inclinations, and distractions.

b. They could not receive him but with a firm faith. "Be not faithless but believing." We are also obliged to approach the Communion-table with a firm faith.

c. They adored him. ("My Lord and my God".) We ought also to adore him with great reverence,

d. They were invited to regard the marks of his wounds. ("He showed them his hands, and his side".) We should also diligently meditate on the sacred truth, especially on the Sacred Passion. "Do this for a commemoration of me."

e. "The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord." It is with ardent desire and holy joy that we should receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Peroration: Receive frequently Holy Communion, and always with devout preparation. Then Jesus will bring you peace and joy.

J. Schmitt.

VII.

JESUS OUR LIGHT.

What sun-rising in its beauty is in relation to the day, that is this day in relation to your lives, the Light of the world rising in all his splendor in your hearts.

1. *Nature of the light.*

a. Although light surrounds us on all sides, and without it life could not be sustained, no man knows what light really is.

Christ is ineffably near to us, in his divine nature by his omnipresence, in the Blessed Sacrament in our churches, and

even in our hearts, and yet, "Generationem ejus quis enarrabit?"

b. Light proceeds from the sun, is brought forth by the sun, and yet is not younger than the sun.

God the Son is generated by the Father, and yet co-eternal with him.

c. Light appears on earth without leaving the sun.

God the Son descended upon earth without leaving heaven.

d. When light shines through colored glass it adopts the color thereof, without depriving the glass of aught. As light, it is co-existent with the sun; it has assumed color since it came in contact with the glass.

Christ took human nature from the blessed Virgin Mary, without detriment to her virginity. As God he is from eternity; he is man since he was born of her.

e. The rays of the sun being hidden behind a cloud, the light is not visible in itself, but is only perceived by its reflection and warmth.

Christ is hidden, so to say, behind the cloud of the sacramental species, but his presence is perceived by his inspirations and graces.

2. *Effects of the light.*

a. Brightness.

Light illuminates the world, and enables us to see and distinguish the varieties of things, and to perceive the way along which we are to go.

Christ by his divine word expels the darkness of paganism, both ancient and modern. In the Blessed Sacrament he has for you the words of eternal life, when you are in distress.

b. Warmth and fertility.

Without the sun, the earth would be a cold, sterile mass; by virtue of its beams it produces a great variety of flowers, fruits, etc.

What is the human soul without Christ? How stupendous are the fruits of holiness produced by Christ in the blessed souls illuminated by him!

Our Saviour is sure to produce the same fruits in your souls, if you put no obstacles in his way. (Effects of Holy Communion in the soul of St. Aloysius.)

c. Joy and beauty.

The light clothes the earth with variegated beauty, especially in spring, and imparts joy to every living creature, both rational and irrational.

Christ dispelled the sadness of the hearts of men when he dwelt visibly on earth. A soul separated from Christ is subject to sadness.

It is especially in the Blessed Sacrament that he gives celestial joys to the loving soul, and clothes her with angelic beauty.

Peroration: Watch ye, and pray, that the Divine Sun may never be darkened within your souls by the poisonous mist, and the gloomy clouds, of sin. The consequences would be fatal. Take care that this spiritual Sun may always shine in your hearts. Then your last Communion, and even your death, will be as a rosy evening sky, preceding the splendid dawn of the eternal sun rising upon your celestial beatitude.

J. Schmitt.

VIII.

THE MANGER AND THE ALTAR.

The Angel who at the birth of Christ appeared to the Shepherds, said: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." And the Shepherds rejoiced exceedingly. To-day you received good tidings of great joy also. For although we do not see the sweet Child Jesus with our corporeal eyes, yet faith teaches us that the same Jesus is here on our altar who once was laid in a Manger.

I. *In the Blessed Sacrament is the same Jesus who was adored in the Manger.*

Consider

1. His humility

a. In the Manger.

The infinitely rich God—poorer than the poorest child. His abode a stable, etc.

The Eternal Wisdom—silent and shedding tears.

The Eternal Omnipotence—carried in the arms of a mother.

b. In the Blessed Sacrament.

The Lord of celestial glory—in poor churches and poorly furnished tabernacles.

Infinite Majesty—under the form of bread.

He who governs the universe—obedient to the words of the priest, carried into the poorest hovels, placed on sacrilegious tongues, and received into sacrilegious hearts.

2. His ardent love.

a. In the Manger.

He has descended into our prison, has become as one of us, and has dwelt in our midst.

He showed his love to all and gave help to everyone.

He suffered for us ineffable pains.

All this through the purest love for us.

b. In the Blessed Sacrament.

He dwells in our midst.

He is accessible to all, the poorest not excepted.

He sacrifices himself entirely for us in the Holy Mass, and suffers many offences, even the outrage of sacrilege.

All this through love for us. And what is the return made him?

II. *Men treat him still in the same way as they treated him at the time of his birth.*

1. Some are indifferent to him.

a. In Bethlehem, in the persons of Mary and Joseph, he knocked at many doors, but in vain.

Some did not hear him—they slept.

Others would not rise—through indolence.

Others had no room for the poor Jesus; they had room only for rich relations, and for their own comfort.

b. In the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus knocks at the doors of many hearts.

Many sleep and do not hear him, because absorbed by the cares of earthly things.

Others are too lukewarm, and slothful to open to him their hearts.

Others have no room. Their hearts are filled with sinful inclinations and desires, so that Jesus finds no place therein.

2. Some are his enemies.

a. The Divine Child had his persecutors:

The bloodthirsty soldiers, and
Herod the hyporite who sent them.

b. In the Blessed Sacrament Jesus is also persecuted

By sacrilegious assaults made by infidels and revolutionists.
By sacrilegious communicants.

3. Some are his friends.

a. The Child Jesus had his friends also,

Who nursed him. (Mary and Joseph.)

Who adored him and offered precious gifts. (The Shepherds, the Wise Men).

Who received him with ardent longing. (Simeon and Anna.)

b. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament meets friends also.

Those who are solicitous for the adornment of his house, who love to be in his society, and are zealous in promoting his honor; and above all in doing his will.

Who attend the Tremendous Sacrifice with reverence and devotion.

Who receive Holy Communion with an ardent desire and a pure heart.

Peroration: Of which number do you want to be? The indifferent frustrated their salvation. Herod perished miserably. But to the Shepherds the Angels sung: "On earth peace to men of good will." Oh! let it be your chief care to follow the Shepherds, and to come to Jesus willingly and frequently, with rever-

ence and purity of heart; and heavenly peace will be your reward here and hereafter.

J. Schmitt.

IX.

THE FIRST, AND LAST COMMUNION.

I. *The First Communion.*

1. How beautiful is it.

2. What is it that distinguishes it so markedly from other holy Communions?

a. Because it is the *first* time that you receive Jesus.

b. The second reason is the more conscientious preparation made for it.

c. The greater purity of your heart.

d. The greater liberty from earthly desires.

e. Therefore more abundant grace.

If your subsequent Communions should be like the first, you would be able to expect with a joyful heart

II. *The Last Communion.*

Consider

a. The Last Communion of the innocent Christian, who preserved the innocence of his childhood. Example: the Last Communion of St. Aloysius.

b. The Last Communion of a converted sinner, and

c. Of the sinner who dies without receiving Holy Communion, or with a new sacrilege on his soul.

2. How will your Last Communion be?

a. You all wish to receive it like St. Aloysius. Your wish will be fulfilled, if you, like him, preserve your innocence, or always receive holy Communion with the same innocence of heart as to-day; if you, like him, receive holy Communion frequently and with ardent devotion, or frequently and as worthily as to-day; if you pray daily, and especially after every Communion, for the grace of perseverance.

b. But you of mature years who have fallen into sins, you desire to receive holy Communion as penitent sinners. Therefore you should not delay your conversion; you should worthily and regularly approach the Communion-table, and guard yourselves from relapse.

c. Final reprobation awaits those who willingly plunge themselves into dangers and proximate occasions of sin; who in spite of all warnings, go on treading the path of sin; and who fill up the measure of their sins by sacrilegious Communions and by giving scandal.

Peroration: Prayer to Jesus that this First Communion of the children may be their last one—that they may meet an early death—rather than meet the fate of the reprobate sinner. Resolutions to be made by adults.

J. Schmitt.

Six Skeleton Sermons

ON THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

(*Suitable for the Forty Hours' Adoration.*)

BY JOSEPH SCHUEN.

SERMON I.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

Once more we are called upon to celebrate the forty hours' adoration in this church. In order to contribute my mite towards enkindling your zeal, and promoting your spiritual welfare, I propose to make the wonderful mystery of our altars the object of our meditations. Let me explain, in the first place, the doctrine of the Church concerning this august mystery. She, the pillar and ground of the truth, teaches us infallibly what we have to believe as to both the presence, and efficacy, of Jesus Christ in the most blessed Sacrament.

I. THE PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

The Church teaches:

1. *The presence of Jesus Christ* in the most blessed Sacrament. This doctrine is founded upon the records of the Evangelists: Mt. xxvi, 26-28; Mk. xiv, 22-24; Lk. xxii, 19, 20; and upon the words of St. Paul I Cor. xi, 23-25.—It is the faith of the Early Christians, the doctrine of the Apostolic Fathers, and of the first Ecclesiastical Councils, and is the foundation of divine worship as practiced in the Apostolic Church. Cf. I Cor. x, 16.

2. *The manner of the sacramental presence.* Jesus Christ is present

a. Entire and undivided.

This is the doctrine of the Council of Trent Sess. xiii. Can. 1. If the entire Christ is present, his human nature and his divine nature are both present; consequently, his divinity

with all its perfections, as infinite power, beauty, beatitude. There is present also his humanity, with all its perfections. His human nature is, however, not present in the state of suffering, as it was on earth, but in the state of glory, as it is in heaven.

b. Under the appearances of bread and wine.

By the appearances of bread and wine we understand all that is apprehended of bread and wine by the senses; as form, color, taste, etc. These appearances, or species, remain after consecration; and, under them, Christ is present; so that he is entire and undivided under the species, both of wine and of bread. Therefore, he who receives Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread only, receives his flesh and blood, his divinity and humanity.

3. *The duration of the presence of Christ.*

The Church teaches, that Christ is present not only for a few moments. Council of Trent Sess. xiii. Can. 4. His sacramental presence lasts as long as the appearances exist. For they are the external sign under which Jesus Christ is present, so that He remains present until the species disappear. On this doctrine is founded the consoling truth, that Jesus Christ dwells in our tabernacle in the midst of his redeemed flock.

Such is the doctrine of the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ. Let us not indulge in subtle inquiries concerning this wonderful mystery, but let us believe with an humble heart.—Let us show the greatest possible reverence toward this most august mystery, and bewail to Jesus our lack of devotion at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

II. THE EFFICACY OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

The Church teaches us, that Jesus Christ in our tabernacle is

1. *Our mediator:*

a. Interceding for us with the Father.

Our Saviour, when sojourning on earth, prayed often and fervently for the world. He does the same in the Sacrament of

the Altar. From the quiet cell of the tabernacle he intercedes for us with the Father, and obtains infinite treasures for mankind; for his petitions are always granted. "I knew that thou hearest me always." John xi, 42. The Church manifests her faith in the mediatorship of Jesus by exposing the Blessed Sacrament to the public adoration of the faithful, especially in times of tribulation, exhorting them to lay their prayers at the feet of the Saviour, that he may present them to the Father.

b. Sacrificing himself for us.

Jesus sacrifices himself at Holy Mass. He renews, in an unbloody manner, the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross.

2. *The distributer of graces:*

a. By consoling men.

Here below is the land of tribulations, the vale of tears. "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries." Job xiv, 1. In the Blessed Sacrament Jesus consoles his children. The Church applies especially to Holy Eucharist the words of Jesus: "Come to me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you" (Mt. xi, 28) and exhorts the suffering to disclose their grief to Jesus in the tabernacle.

b. By visiting men.

"My flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed." John vi, 56. The Lord visits men in the Blessed Sacrament, as he once visited John the Baptist; hiding himself under the species of bread, but *vere, realiter, et substantialiter.* Conc. Trid. Sess. xiii. Can. 1. The fruits of this visit are abundant graces.

Peroration: How great a consolation to us, that Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament intercedes for us and distributes divine grace! We are in need of a mediator, since we offend God so often; and we are in need of grace, since we are so poor and miserable. And, therefore, how urgent reasons have we to come to our sacramental God, that the source of celestial mercy may be opened to us! (Exhortation to visit frequently this Blessed Sacrament, to receive frequently Holy Communion, and to attend Holy Mass.)

SERMON II.

THE FIGURES OF HOLY EUCHARIST.

"Now these things were done in a figure of us." I Cor. x, 6. God has deposited in the Blessed Sacrament all treasures of his charity and mercy. Mankind has been drawing graces out of this fountain of grace for nearly two thousand years, and this fountain will never fail, until the Son of God returns to judge the living and the dead. This Blessed Sacrament, decreed from all eternity for the salvation of mankind, was prefigured in the Old Covenant, and we may make these figures the subject of our present meditation. We will single out for our meditation three figures especially of the Blessed Sacrament: the sacrifice of Melchisedech, the Paschal Lamb, and the Manna.

I. THE SACRIFICE OF MELCHISEDECH.

I. In Gen. xiv we read, that Lot had been taken prisoner at the overthrow of Sodom. Which when Abram had heard, he pursued the enemy, and brought back Lot with his substance. On his return, in the vale of Save, "Melchisedech the king o Salem, bringing forth bread and wine, for he was the priest of the most high God, blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abram by the most high God, who created heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high God, by whose protection the enemies are in thy hands. And he gave them the tithes of all."

II. This sacrifice of Melchisedech is a figure of Holy Eucharist, regarding both his person and his sacrifice.

1. The person of Melchisedech.

He was

a. A king: "king of Salem," i. e., king of peace. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is also a king. *Rex Judaeorum.* Mt. ii, 2. His realm has no boundries and is eternal. He is "the Lord of lords, and King of kings." Apoc. xvii, 14. Therefore "in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell." Philip. ii, 10. He is the king of peace. "And coming, he preached peace to you, who were

afar off, and peace to them who were near at hand; for through him we have both access in one Spirit to the Father." Eph. ii, 17. By virtue of his death on the Cross we have been reconciled to God and to the holy Angels.

b. A priest. "He was the priest of the most high God." Jesus hidden under the sacramental species is the priest of the New Covenant. "Christ did not glorify himself to be made a High-Priest, but He that said to him: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Heb. v, 5. "Having, therefore, a great High-Priest who hath penetrated the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." Heb. iv, 14. He is a priest according to the order of Melchisedech. "Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech." Heb. v, 6.

2. The sacrifice of Melchisedech.

"He brought forth bread and wine." Jesus in instituting the Holy Eucharist, chose bread and wine. Mt. xxvi, 26-28.

Thus in Melchisedech of old, who was both king and priest, was prefigured the new Melchisedech, the God of the mystery of the altar, in whom the dignity of king and priest is united. By the sacrifice of Melchisedech, consisting in bread and wine, the sacrifice of Christ is prefigured, who under the species of bread and wine offers himself up to his Heavenly Father. O that we would attend this Holy Sacrifice with the reverence with which Abram attended the sacrifice of Melchisedech!

II. THE PASCHAL LAMB.

1. God had compassion on his people in the Egyptian slavery and summoned Pharao through Moses: "Let my people go to sacrifice to me." Exodus viii, 1. When Pharao would not obey, terrible plagues were inflicted upon all Egypt, and at last the Lord made known: "Every first-born in the land of the Egyptians shall die, from the first-born of Pharao who sitteth on his throne, even to the first-born of the handmaid that is at the mill." Exodus xi, 5.

The Israelites were commanded by the Lord to slaughter a lamb. "Let every man take a lamb by their families and houses.

And it shall be a lamb without blemish, a male, of one year. The whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it in the evening (of the fourteenth day of this month). And they shall take of the blood thereof, and put it upon both the side posts, and on the upper door-posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh that night, roasted at the fire, and unleavened bread, with wild lettuce. And thus you shall eat it: you shall gird your loins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands; and you shall eat in haste." Exodus xii, 3-11. The command was obeyed, and the sword of the destroying angel fell upon no Israelitish head.

2. The Christian Paschal Lamb is Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

a. The Lamb.

Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament, is frequently in Holy Scripture compared to a lamb, and is indeed named *the Lamb.* "He shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer." Isai. liii, 7. "Behold the Lamb of God; behold, He who taketh away the sin of the world." John i, 29. You were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." I Pet. i, 19.

b. The lamb without blemish.

This requirement in the Paschal Lamb signified the holiness of Him who is present in our tabernacle, and typifies to us the high-priest who is "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Heb. vii, 26.

c. The preparing of the lamb.

It was forbidden to break its legs. When the soldiers "came to Jesus, and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs." John xix, 33. It was to be roasted at the fire. Our Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament is, as it were, consumed with fire, the fire of infinite and everlasting love for mankind.

d. The manner of eating the lamb.

It was a command to eat it entirely. In Holy Communion the entire Christ is received, that is, his body, his blood, his soul,

and his divinity.—The children of Israel had to eat the lamb as if about to start on a journey. The Holy Eucharist is a sweet food in our earthly pilgrimage. As wayfarers we approach the Communion-table. They had to take it with wild lettuce, a bitter herb growing in the field. We should receive the Sacrament of the Altar with a contrite heart and a sorrowful soul.

e. The blessing of the lamb.

His blood appeased the wrath of God and reconciled the avenging Angel. In the Blessed Sacrament the sacred Blood of the Son of God protects from eternal death and repels the infernal robber.

Oh! that we would receive our true Paschal Lamb with the same fervent preparation with which the Israelites held their Pasch.

III. THE MANNA OF THE DESERT.

1. When the Jews had crossed the Red Sea, they entered the desert. Feeling hungry, they murmured against God, who then said to Moses: "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." Exodus xvi, 4. "And in the morning a dew lay round about the camp. And when it had covered the face of the earth, it appeared in the wilderness small, and as it were beaten with a pestle, like unto the hoar-frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another: Manhu? which signifieth: what is this? for they knew not what it was. And Moses said to them: This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." xvi, 13-16. "And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land: with this meat were they fed, until they reached the boarders of the land of Chanaan." xvi, 35.

2. This miraculous bread was a figure of the sacramental bread in the New Covenant. Points of similarity:

a. The manna fell from heaven. "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." The Sacrament of the Altar is a heavenly mystery. "This is the bread descending down from heaven." John vi, 50.

b. The manna fell at night time. The Blessed Sacrament is inaccessible to our senses and to our understanding, and demands our unconditional subjection to the word of God.

c. The manna was given only to the chosen people. Jesus Christ gives the Holy Eucharist only to his children. Jews and Gentiles are excluded, until by the gate of baptism they enter the Church.

d. The manna was of white color, and sweet as honey. The Blessed Sacrament appears to us in white color. This is the color of spotless purity, the visible hem of the Saviour's royal garment. The sweet taste signifies the heavenly sweetness and consolation imparted to the soul by Holy Communion.

e. The manna was the food of the Israelites on their journey through the desert. The Holy Eucharist is the food of pilgrims on earth.

f. God ceased raining manna from heaven, as soon as the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, and reached the boarders of the Promised Land. At the hour of death the Christian reveives the Holy Eucharist for the last time. Then he crosses the waters of Jordan into the heavenly Chanaan, to reign with his Saviour for ever.

Peroration: Thus is the "manna" an appropriate figure of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Would that, in the desert of this life, we might frequently and worthily eat the manna of the New Covenant! Then should we travel with courage the rough road, and happily reach the eternal mansions.

SERMON III.

THE PROMISE.

"This is the bread that came down from heaven." John vi, 59. When our divine Saviour entered the world, the fountains of divine grace were opened. The abundance of mercy, prefigured in the Old Covenant, was now imparted to mankind. The pearl and crown of all graces was the miraculous Sacrament of

the Altar, concerning which St. Augustine says: "Divine wisdom is not able to give anything better, divine charity to give anything holier, nor divine omnipotence to give anything greater." In order to prepare his disciples for this infinite blessing, our Saviour promised them the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, before the time of its institution arrived. Let this *Promise* be the subject of our present meditation. It is a promise (1) on which we can confidently rely, and (2) which is the source of great consolation.

I. THE PROMISE IS RELIABLE.

What is the promise? It is recorded John vi, 48-60, and is as follows: "I am the bread of life," etc. We can perfectly rely on this promise. Consider

1. *Who made the promise?*

Jesus Christ, who is the consubstantial Son of the Heavenly Father, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." Col. i, 15. Therefore his promise is

a. Perfectly sincere.

Christ is the eternal Truth. "God is not as a man, that he should lie." Numb. xxiii, 19. "The truth of the Lord remaineth for ever." Ps. cxvi, 2.

b. Sure to be fulfilled.

Christ is eternal Truth. "Hath he said then, and will he not do? hath he spoken, and will he not fulfill?" Numb. xxiii, 19. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away." Mt. xxiv, 35. When God makes a promise, it is impossible, by His nature, that he should not fulfill it.

The only question, therefore, is this: Is the promise made by Jesus so plain, that we cannot doubt that he promised to give us his Flesh to eat and his Blood to drink? It is as plain as words can make it.

2. *What is the tenor of the promise?*

The wording of it is such as to manifest evidently the intention of Jesus to give us his sacred Flesh and Blood as a meat and a drink. We infer this

a. From his words.

He says clearly, that he will give us a miraculous bread, and that this bread is his own Flesh. "The bread which I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world." John vi, 52. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life." (55.) "My flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed." (56.) "He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." (58.)

b. From his manner of action.

To the Jews the word of the Lord appeared as a folly. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" John vi, 53. Therefore Jesus said, with great decision: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." (54.) Nor could the disciples comprehend the word, and many of them left Jesus. "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" (61.) "After this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (67.) But the Lord insists on belief in his words, and allows even his Apostles to stay with him only under the condition that they believe his saying. "Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (68 and 69.)

Let us then never hesitate in our belief in the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ in our midst: He has pledged his word, and "the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever." Ps. cxvi, 2.

II. THIS PROMISE IS TO US A GREAT CONSOLATION.

Jesus Christ promises

1. *A blessing of infinite value.*

He says: "The bread which I will give, is my flesh." John vi, 52. Again: "My flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed." (56.) And "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." (57.) The Lord promises to give us his divine flesh and blood, which by virtue of the hypostatic union is of infinite value.

2. *The fulness of grace.*

Jesus intimated, in his promise of the Blessed Sacrament, the graces imparted to those who receive it. They are principally two:

a. The grace of union.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." Incomprehensible grace! Christ in us, and we in Christ! Christ belongs to us, and we belong to Christ. "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii, 20.

b. The grace of election.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life." (55.) "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." (58.) But "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." (54.) The worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist protects us from sin, and establishes us in justice, so that we live and die as children of God.

Peroration: Oh! let us thank the Son of God for his mercy, and considering this great mystery, which he promised and instituted, as the most precious grace, let us make fervent use of it for our salvation.

SERMON IV.

THE INSTITUTION.

"Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave it to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: This is my body." Mt. xxvi, 26. Before leaving this world, our Saviour instituted the Blessed Sacrament, the pledge and memorial of his tenderest love. Let the act of institution be the subject of our present meditation.

I. THE MANNER OF INSTITUTING THIS BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Jesus instituted this stupendous mystery

1. *In unequivocal, unambiguous words.*

a. Three Evangelists record the words of institution. Mt. xxvi, 26-28. Mk. xiv, 22-24. Lk. xxii, 19-21. The Lord took bread in his holy and venerable hands, and said: This is my body. Consequently it was his body. In a similar manner Jesus took the chalice filled with wine, and said: This is my Blood. What else then could it be but his Blood?—The words of institution are so plain and obvious, that, throughout a period of one thousand years, not the least doubt arose concerning their sense, until, about the middle of the eleventh century, Berengar endeavored to explain them in a contrary sense, so as to arouse the indignation of the Christian world, which, in fifteen councils, rejected his explanation.

b. Knowing that Christ has assured us that the consecrated bread is his body, we are convinced of our duty to believe his words. Christ is the eternal Truth, "who did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth." I Pet. ii, 22. "When Christ asserts, that this is his Body, who would dare to doubt it? When he says, This is my Blood, who could think that it might not be so?" St. Cyrill.

2. *Under significant species.*

Jesus chose bread and wine.

a. Bread being the food of our body, is a symbol of the Blessed Sacrament, which imparts to our soul immortal food. "Our bodies are kept alive, and gain strength, by receiving appropriate nourishment. But what returns to the soul its failing strength? The nourishment of which the Lord says: My Flesh is meat indeed, and my Blood is drink indeed." St. Cyrill. Bread is the daily food of all men, and the most acceptable of all. It is also for this reason a suitable symbol of the Blessed Sacrament, for the reception of which our soul should long with ardent desire. "We desire to receive daily this celestial bread. We receive daily the Lord's Supper as a food that works the salvation of our soul." St. Cyprian.

b. Wine, being a generous drink, is a beautiful symbol of the precious Blood of Christ, one drop of which excels in value all the treasures of heaven and earth.—Wine, furthermore,

cheers the heart of man (Ps. ciii, 15). The reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord imparts to the soul consolation and peace.

Let us always receive Holy Communion in such a disposition that what the species signify may be realized in us, that our souls may be nourished unto life everlasting, and our hearts may be strengthened with streams of celestial joy.

II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE INSTITUTION.

Three of these circumstances are especially worthy of our attention.

1. *The circumstance of the time.*

It was the eve of His Sacred Passion. "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: "Take ye, and eat: this is my Body which shall be delivered for you." I Cor. xi, 23. Why did Jesus choose this time?

a. In order that he might show his love toward us. The world had conspired against the Saviour. Judas had received the price of a betrayer. The false witnesses were found; the Pharisees and Scribes could no longer suppress their wrath and fury. The Great Passion of the Lord was to begin in one hour. The Lord himself is at the very same time anxious to bless the world. For this end he institutes the Sacrament of the Altar. Verily "God is charity." I John iv, 8. O that we would return this love! "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Rom. viii, 35, ff.

b. In order to leave a vivid remembrance of himself.

Whatever parents, and friends on their death-bed, ask their children and friends, and whatever they then say to them, cannot be forgotten. Jesus instituted the Blessed Sacrament shortly before his death. Can we then ever forget him? "I will be mindful, and remember; and my soul shall languish within me." Lam. iii, 20. "If I forget thee, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee." Ps. cxxxvi, 5.

2. *The circumstance of the place.*

"He will show you a large dining-room furnished." Mk. xiv, 15. The interpreters of Holy Scripture see in this dining-room

a. A figure of the Holy Church.

Christ and his Apostles being gathered together, represented the Church: Christ the head, the Apostles the members of the body. By selecting this symbol of the Church as the place, wherein he instituted the Holy Eucharist, he intended to intimate, that this divine mystery belongs exclusively to his Church and her children. "In one house shall the Paschal Lamb be eaten, neither shall you carry forth of the flesh thereof out of the house." Exodus xii, 46.

Let us rejoice, because, as members of the Catholic Church, we have access to the divine mystery of charity.

b. A figure of the soul.

It was in a large dining-room beautifully adorned that Christ instituted the Blessed Sacrament. Thereby it was intimated, that the soul which is to receive the Holy Eucharist should be great in her resolutions and sacrifices for the kingdom of heaven, adorned with Christian virtues, with humility, chastity, meekness, charity. Does this description apply to your soul?

3. *The circumstance of the persons.*

When the Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament, he was surrounded by his Apostles. "When evening was come, he cometh with the twelve." Mk. xiv, 17. "When the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him." Lk. xxii, 14.

We behold here

a. The faithful disciples.

They are the eleven Apostles who loved ardently their divine Master. How great must have been their love and devotion during the sacred functions in the dining-room! Would that, whenever we approach the Communion-table, we would take the Apostles for our models!

b. The perfidious disciple.

It is Judas, the son of malediction. He received the Blessed Sacrament with the other Apostles, but to his own perdition. Let us beware of the same crime! "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself not discerning the body of the Lord." I Cor. xi, 29. "Those who profane this adorable sacrament, are to drink the cup of divine wrath throughout eternity." St. John of Damascus.

SERMON V.

THE PERMANENCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"Do this for a commemoration of me." Lk. xxii, 19. Jesus said to his Apostles, before he ascended into heaven: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Mt. xxviii, 20. This promise has been fulfilled in a literal sense. Our Saviour is to dwell in the midst of his redeemed children by his personal presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, until the day when he will come again in his visible human nature. Let the *permanence of this Blessed Sacrament* be the subject of our present meditation.

I. THE MANNER IN WHICH JESUS MADE THIS PERMANENCE POSSIBLE.

He made it possible

1. By the commission which he gave to his Apostles.

When the Lord had given his divine Body and Blood to his Apostles, he added: "Do this for a commemoration of me." What is the meaning of these words?

"*Do this.*" These words imply a command of the Lord. "You have been witnesses of what I have done before your eyes, changing bread into my body and distributing it among you to eat. It is my will, that you do the same."

"*For a commemoration of me.*" This is another command of the Lord. "It is my will that you perform this sacred action in remembrance of me, of my charity, of my sufferings and death."

2. By the power which he conferred upon his Apostles.

The power of effecting transubstantiation was contained in the commission to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Therefore the words "Do this" imply the power of consecration, so that by virtue of these words the Apostles were appointed priests of the New Covenant. Vide Conc. Trid. Sess. xii. Can. 2. This power was continued from the Apostles to their successors, the bishops and priests.

Let us thank our Lord for having perpetuated the mystery of the Altar; and let us honor the priests, to whom so great a power has been confided.

II. THE GREAT BLESSING OF THIS PERMANENCE.

1. God dwells in our midst:

a. The infinitely great God.

"Almighty is his name." Exodus xv, 3. "The King of kings, and Lord of lords." I Tim. vi, 15. The great God who laid the foundations of the earth and assigned the stars their stations. The great God who stilled the tempests of the sea, raised the dead to life, and cast out the devils. The great God who bears the sceptre of eternity, and before whom the angels lie prostrate on their faces. "There is none like to thee, O Lord: thou art great, and great is thy name in might." Jeremias x, 6.

b. The infinitely rich God.

He who dwells in our tabernacle is the God whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof (Ps. xxiii, 1). "Thine are the heavens." Ps. lxxxviii, 12. "In his hand are all the ends of the earth; and the heights of the mountains are his. For the sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land." Ps. xciv, 4. All the treasures on earth and in heaven are his.

c. The infinitely bountiful God.

In our midst dwells God, of whom it is written: "Thou openest thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature:" the infinitely bountiful God, who for our sake descended from heaven to work and suffer for us during thirty-three years; who spoke comfort to those who mourned, and gave pardon to sinners; the infinitely bountiful God, who sacrifices himself daily for the world, and gives us his own Flesh and Blood.

2. We have free access to Jesus:

a. Without difficulty. The sacramental God is not a long way off, but in your church. There are no guards to hold you back. Every one is welcome. "Come to me all you that labor." Mt. xi, 28.

b. At any time: in the morning, at noon, at night. You may stay before his throne any length of time.

Peroration: Did you heretofore make good use of this great blessing? Behold, your God is so near to you, the fountain of mercy is before you, Jesus of Nazareth is your neighbor. You are so poor, so miserable, so needy of grace. And yet either you come not to him, or you come with a heart void of love. Are you not afraid, that the Gentiles, who never possessed our sacramental treasure, will be your accusers before God? Make use of the grace offered you. "He that thirsteth, let him come; and he that will, let him take the water of life, gratis." Apoc. xxii, 17.

SERMON VI.

THE END OF THE INSTITUTION.

"This is the bread descending down from heaven; that if any one eat of it, he may not die." John vi, 50. God has the wisest intention in whatever he ordains. In instituting the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, he intended to promote the glory of the Father, to leave a remembrance of himself on earth, and to promote the welfare of mankind.

I. THE GLORY OF THE FATHER.

Jesus intended to promote, after his death, also, the honor of his Father, which had been the aim of his temporal life. He realized this intention

1. *By sacrificing himself to his Father.*

By the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the Heavenly Father is infinitely honored.

a. The priest is of infinite dignity. It is the only-begot-

ten Son of God. "Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech." Heb. v, 6. He is the splendor of the Father's glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power. Heb. i, 3.

b. The offering is infinitely holy. It is the same as was offered on the Cross. It is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.—The Saint of saints. Dan. ix, 24. "The image of the invisible God." Col. i, 15.—It is obvious, that by one Holy Sacrifice of the Mass God is infinitely more honored than by all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, more than by all the praises of angels and men: for the honor being infinite, is perfectly worthy of God.

2. *By giving himself to us in Holy Communion.*

"My Flesh is meat indeed." John vi, 56. By Holy Communion the honor of God is promoted

a. By enkindling in our hearts the love of God.

At the Communion-table the Saints gained strength to design and carry out their heroic deeds for the honor of God; the members of our orders of charity gain there strength to fulfill the arduous duties of their vocation.

b. By inspiring us with the desire to suffer for God.

The soul receives the grace to embrace the Cross. It is by the miraculous bread of the strong that the martyrs were encouraged to embrace the bloody death they suffered for the honor of God. "He is not able to suffer martyrdom, who is not armed by the Church, and the soul that has not received the Eucharist, succumbs." St. Cyprian.

How great a consolation in our littleness to possess this admirable means of promoting the honor of God!

II. THE REMEMBRANCE OF JESUS.

"Do this for a commemoration of me." Lk. xxii, 19. Jesus desired to have preserved

1. *The remembrance of his charity.*

Jesus Christ "hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Apoc. i, 5. He has loved us with an infinite

love. In order that his love might not be forgotten, he left for us

a. The best pledge of his love. What better pledge of his love could the Lord have given us than his own self?

b. The greatest treasure of his love. "The infinite divine charity can give nothing greater." St. Augustine.

2. *The remembrance of his Sacred Passion.*

"Christus passus est pro nobis." I Pet. ii, 21. In order that his Sacred Passion might be ever represented before our spiritual eyes, our Lord instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is not only a remembrance, but the unbloody renewal, of the Sacrifice of the Cross. And since this divine Sacrifice is immolated on thousands of altars "from the rising of the sun even to the going down" (Mal. i, 11), the remembrance of the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross is kept alive throughout the whole world.

It would be a sign of unpardonable ingratitude, if notwithstanding all this, you did not remember his charity and his sufferings, if you were negligent in visiting Jesus in your church. "You have forgotten God, who brought you up, and you have grieved Jerusalem (the Holy Church) that nursed you." Baruch iv, 8.

III. THE WELFARE OF MANKIND.

Christ instituted this Blessed Sacrament

1. *For a consolation in our pilgrimage.*

"The days of my pilgrimage are a few and evil." Gen. xlvii, 9. "Great labor is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam." Ecclus. xl, 1. The Blessed Sacrament brings us

a. Consolation. "Come to me all you that labor." Mt. xi, 28. This promise is fulfilled, whenever the suffering man approaches with confidence his God in the tabernacle. "Thou didst feed thy people with the food of Angels, and gavest them bread from heaven, having in it all that is delicious, and sweetness of every taste."

b. Help. We read in Holy Scripture, that the suffering

were relieved whenever they approached Jesus. In the Blessed Sacrament the same Jesus is present, whose word healed the infirmities of the human family. His arm is not shortened, his love is not diminished.

Christ instituted the Blessed Sacrament

2. *In order to facilitate our pilgrimage.*

Man is a wayfarer toward heaven. "For here we have no permanent city; but we seek one to come." Heb. xiii, 14. As such he has a double task to perform: he has to combat (James i, 13; I Pet. v, 8; I John ii, 15), and to live a virtuous life (Mt. v, 48). For both the Blessed Sacrament gives essential help

a. By strengthening him for the combat. Jesus Christ, whose virginal Flesh comes in contact with our sinful flesh, subdues our passions.

b. By leading him to virtue. The worthy reception of the Blessed Sacrament is the most effective means of promoting virtue the Church possesses. "The humble Bread will render thee humble also; the amiable Bread will render thee amiable also; the most chaste Flesh of Jesus Christ will render thee also quite pure and chaste." St. Cyril.

Let then, O child of earth and pilgrim toward heaven, the Blessed Eucharist be ever the love and treasure of thy heart.

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